Sister Mary John Berchmans

To my dear Mrs. Coakley

Yours gratefully

Sister Mary Edwin.

Oakland, Aug. 23. 1929

Sister Mary John Berchmans

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By SISTER MARY EDWIN

SISTER MARY JOHN BERCHMANS

Sister Mary John Berchmans

RELIGIOUS OF
THE HOLY NAMES OF JESUS AND MARY

LIFE, AND SPIRITUAL NOTES

COLLECTED AND PREPARED

By

SISTER MARY EDWIN

That I may love Thee to the fullest extent of my being in time and in eternity; that I may do all the good Thou hast destined me to do, according to the furthest reach of Thy Will; and that I may have an abiding sense of Thy Presence.

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FOREWORD

"It is good to hide the secret of a king" said the Angel Raphael to Tobias and his family, "but honorable to reveal and confess the works of God."

The works which Our Lord God wrought in the soul of your Sister, whose name in religion was Mary John Berchmans, as is recorded in the diary which she left behind—for she has been dead several years already—are marked by grace. They ought not to be kept hidden, but published to the world, for God's honor is in them.

I have been reading these records, pondering over them for three days, and I hold them to be a priceless treasure. I had just been reading St. Teresa's Life, written by herself, and I have compared our venerated Sister Mary John Berchmans' supernatural experiences as registered in the manuscript transmitted to me, with those of the seraphic St. Teresa, and they do not appear to me less wonderful. She was a most sublime contemplative, elevated to the highest mysticism, and, I should say also, to a most eminent degree of sanctity. Her diary makes all this appear clearly. In reading I marvelled and was delighted beyond expression. Perhaps it is because I have known her

that I find these memoirs most interesting, or, at least, especially interesting. Still I do not think that my prejudice in her favor makes me esteem these memoirs above their worth. I know that your Sister was a saint, and died a saint, and what I read in this diary confirms my judgment and adds a new, most remarkable proof to those which I had with me before.

I will relate here how I came to know Sister M. John Berchmans, of holy memory, and what impressions were left with me from my acquaintance with her. I think it was in 1910, when I was Ordinary Confessor of the Sisters at 10th Street in San Francisco. Sister M. John Berchmans, while sick in Oakland, was sent from Oakland to this Convent, where Sister M. Marcella—like you, doubly her sister—presided as Superior over the Community. I think she alludes to this visit in her diary. As I entered the Convent I was informed by Sister M. Marcella that her sister had come thither hopeful and rejoicing that she would be able to consult me about her soul. What communications Sister M. John Berchmans made of her own self to Sister M. Marcella I do not know. The latter let me easily gather, not only that she loved her most dearly, but also that she held her in very high esteem as a holy soul. I did not know Sister M. John Berchmans and I do not think that anyone had ever spoken of her to me.

I have no recollection that she mentioned to me any of those extraordinary graces described in her journal; or, if she did, I failed to grasp them in their full significance. What I saw was that here was a soul faithful to grace, but I did not suppose that the grace vouchsafed her was anything but the ordinary. Yet she appeared to me to be a saint. Afterwards, I came to know that others, who had known her, as her confessors, had also considered her to be a saint. They could not have thought otherwise if they came to know her as I did later. I did not judge her otherwise than by the virtues that I saw in her.

I have a clear remembrance of the principal things that I saw in her and that gave me that opinion I formed of her sanctity. First, she possessed a great union with God, for she never lost sight of the Divine Presence. But I then attributed this union to her state of recollection and not to any miraculous gifts which she might have received, as her journal shows. Secondly, a most remarkable purity of soul, in such a way that she seemed established in goodness, without the least attachment save to God. Thirdly, she was thoroughly meek and humble. This is what I understood best of her. Her heart was thoroughly sweet, and her peace unalterable. Yet she had passed, and she was passing, through many trials. Fourthly, and this is what I admired most in her—

her *charity*. There was only love in that soul for her Sisters, and for all. She could not condemn, but only excuse. She was most tender and compassionate; and, I should have judged that whosoever had come in contact with her would have been struck by this trait. Considering the state of suffering Sister M. John Berchmans was in, and knowing how hard it is for human nature—even in those who seem to be perfect religious—not at some time or other, to violate—in the least—charity, in thought, word, or deed, the good Sister appeared to me both admirable and lovable.

These things I mentioned at other times, when I happened to speak with others, after she had left this earth. I always, also, spoke of her as a saint. Of this, many Sisters will bear me testimony. Two years after her death, I happened to be at Ramona Convent, near Los Angeles. I do not know if then, for the first time, I was told of the death of Sister M. John Berchmans, but I know that I made her panegyric to all the Sisters, who had assembled together and desired to hear a spiritual word from me. I told them that I had great things to say of this Sister, whom I had known to he very holy, and who could serve as a pattern to all religious. Then, I spoke to them of those four remarkable things I had observed in her and which I have mentioned above. Many of your Sisters must still remember this conversation

of mine. Of course, things were more vivid in my memory then than they are now.

But there is a fifth thing, which I think, I never mentioned before, and which I admired in our Sister, when I met her, and I wish to mention it here. It was her wisdom or prudence; for having given some counsel to her sister, who must have intimately opened her heart to her as to the administration of her community, she gave such counsel as can come only from one who judged with the spirit of God, or with supernatural wisdom.

Since I had known our venerable Sister so well and held her in great esteem for sanctity, could the perusal of her journal, in which so many wonders are discovered, have been otherwise than extremely delightful to me? And it proved also a novelty, for it made me know of her far more than I had known or surmised. The supernatural graces which the Divine Goodness poured upon her soul are most extraordinary, have their own evidence in the narration she makes of them and make her venerable to those who can read and understand, as the descriptions attest her as one most privileged supernaturally. "The Little Flowers of Jesus" are not so rare as some people think in our days; yea, they are in plenty. Our dear Sister John Berchmans was one of these Little Flowers, and when she becomes known, particularly through her journal, she will win admiration and love, and

draw people to invoke her with devotion in order to obtain favors and miracles.

Let me state here briefly, for I have been too long already—in a letter—that the journal of our Sister discloses things in mysticism as, perhaps, to be unique and not to be found in our greatest mystics. One of these things is the plan which God, in His infinite wisdom, formed and then executed to elevate her to the highest union with Him, and to the highest perfection. We see this plan while she is not aware of it, and while we behold what is so sweetly and so perfectly displayed in her, we cannot help being lost in admiration, and benediction.

She relates whatever takes place within her soul, without looking to enlighten anybody; and in reading her, we are filled with light about the purity, sweetness and greatness of the Mother of the Incarnate Word, about the beauty and excellence of Christ's Humanity, and the infinite attractions of the Most Blessed Trinity. She expresses a desire of writing on the Blessed Virgin. I doubt not but that if she had been able to write it, the book would have added many things worth knowing to the Marian Theology we already possess. Evidently her mind possessed great thoughts about the Blessed Virgin, and she thought herself capable of discoursing sublimely of her. I shall add, also, that from the description she gives of her supernatural experiences, great lights are

given by her from which the science of Mystical Theology may probably draw great advantages.

In the highest phase of the mystical life, the soul feels, touches, and experiences God—knows Him, as one by union with itself, and feels so wrapt up in the contemplation of His beauty and His other attributes as to feel entirely united to Him and possessing Him. After that the soul feels so detached from all that is created that nothing can satisfy it but God, and when God withdraws Himself so as to leave her cut off from Him, there ensues that utter solitude and desolation which is the unspeakable pain of souls raised to the highest degree of contemplation and union with God. Such favors and such experiences were granted to our Sister.

Now, it is often asked, what is that knowledge of God which the soul then receives, that is not the intuition of God or the Beatific Vision, but yet, to all intents, so similar to it? This is an obscure point of mystical Theology, which no one, to my knowledge, has answered with any satisfaction. What our Sister relates, without intending it as an explanation, may somewhat explain the mystery and satisfy the inquiring mind. It would seem that there is no intellectual vision of the Divine; i. e., be this the Blessed Virgin, Christ, Our Lord in His Humanity, or God, the Infinite Being—unless a transformation of the soul itself into

these objects precedes from a transformation achieved slowly, little by little, through many stages. The soul thus transformed, when a divine light analogous to the light of glory, that intervenes in the Beatific Vision, is communicated to it, intues itself through itself, and is, at the same time, the species or mirror representing the object of its transformation; and *in* it, and *by* it sees this object, feels the presence of this object, touches it and knows it as it knows itself as identified with itself (all of which are expressions of the mystics and notably of our venerable Sister) and by a certain act of consciousness and not of understanding, as the same Sister notices in her journal.

The soul, by this act, has a vision of God most exalted, for what it sees through the species, which is her transformed soul, invested by the Divine lights, is *God Himself,* but no intuition or immediate vision; i. e., without a species no matter how exalted and perfect that species may be, as happens in the Beatific Vision. In both cases, the soul is united to God and possesses Him, but in mystic contemplation only through a miraculous transcendent image of God and not properly through God Himself. This at least, seems to me, an explanation, and the theology of St. Thomas would be in favor of it. . . .

What Sister M. John Berchmans saw was Christ, not appearing to the bodily eyes, but to

the mind, and seen in the image which He had formed of Himself in her very soul, which He had transformed, and to which He had united Himself; for there He is more especially present where He more especially works. In this way, He is said to visit the souls He especially favors, so as to be present in them.

And now, I come, after my long talk on Sister John Berchmans and her journal, to a practical conclusion, which is the point I desired to urge in this letter of mine. Sister John Berchmans, who was doubly your sister, was a saint, and died in the reputation of sanctity. I know of several Fathers of our Society who knew her well and were perfectly convinced of this. She has left examples of great virtue well remembered, and memoirs that attest her sanctity. What a pity if all this should be buried in oblivion and if her memory should not be perpetuated through posterity! She is a light and a great light! Let her shine to illumine men, and lead them to health and salvation. Invoked, she will shower graces from Heaven; yea, obtain from her God great miracles, since He has bestowed on her the tokens of His most privileged love. Her character, so attractive, will easily conquer hearts, and draw them to rely upon her with love and confidence. And, to whom

should we commit the task of making known to the world our venerable Sister of most holy memory, by writing her biography, but to you, her Sister? The pen suits you well, as we all know, and there is not another subject that should interest you to use your talents as the memory of your holy sister. Think also how much she will contribute to glorify Jesus and to glorify Mary, if she is known, since her love for them was so wonderful and she could praise them so well.

I know your difficulty, which you have avowed to me, and I knew it before you spoke of it to me. The difficulty is—that as you take the pen to write of her, and you think of her, you seem to melt, and the tears make you unable to write.

Lately I was speaking to one of the sisters of Pius X, of holy and happy memory. In the course of conversation, I began to speak with some fervor of Pius X, so beloved of all, and for whom petitions from all sides have been sent to the Holy Father for the introduction of his cause. Soon she lowered her eyes, and turned pale as she listened. Fearing that she would not be able to control her feelings, she raised her eyes and looked at me beseechingly—and with what expression! and exclaimed: "Oh, Father! he is our brother, and we cannot speak ill of him!" She expressed much

with these words and I interrupted the discourse by asking for some relics—if it might be possible to have them—of our beloved Pontiff.

Yet, even in cases like this, there is a way of forcing oneself. St. Bernard had lost his brother, Guido, whom he loved so well. He would have liked to speak of him, but he could not. Finally, after many days of silence, as he was delivering a homily to his brethren on the Canticle of Canticles, to ease himself, and to satisfy those who desired it, he diverted from the commentary to speak of his beloved Guido, who had left him alone. He spoke weeping, and wept speaking; but can we find any page in his eloquent homilies on the Canticles so eloquent or charming as those in which he speaks of his beloved Guido, worthy of his esteem and of his love?

You, also, dear Sister, writing of your Sister John Berchmans, of holy memory, will be permitted to weep writing, but you will write weeping and we shall have something which we shall admire and for which we shall bless you. Courage! your holy Sister from Heaven will help you.

If I can make a suggestion, it would be that a short biography at once be made and that in it be included—if not all the journal of our venerated Sister, at least, a good portion of it, and this be

circulated around with the request to those who have known her, to send to you their information for a larger and fuller biography; but hasten the work and let Superiors with their zeal help your zeal.

With sentiments of esteem, I am

Your humble servant in Our Lord,

D. GIACOBBI, S. J.

St. Ignatius' College,
San Francisco, Cal.
Feast of St. John Berchmans,
Nov. 26, 1924.

PART I

Life of Sister Mary John Berchmans

CHAPTER I.

"Quis Ascendet in Montem Domini?"

N OLDEN TIMES there have been souls, who, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and wishing to attain to a more complete union with the Divine Lover, have made for themselves an anchor-hold—a place of greater retirement than was ordinarily permitted by their rule. There they lived in closest intimacy with the Divine Spouse; and there, shut in from the rush and turmoil of the world, they died. That they suffered, at times, from interior trials or exterior woes goes without saying; but that they experienced the ecstatic bliss of the saints, and, at times, the very blessedness of the angels is also without doubt. Loosed from the leash of the crowd, separated from the many who are somehow caught in the maelstrom, called "life," they walked calmly on the high hills of sanctity, where their gaze was unobstructed, and their vision wondrously clear.

May we not assert that at all times have there been such souls, who, like these favored ones, have come near unto the King, to learn His secrets, to hear His words, and to mould their thoughts on

His? Closer and closer have they approached the Holy Presence, until the Divine Image shines in their lives, and radiates from their every action. As hour after hour passes, and day after day goes by, this commingling of the divine with the human, this real communion of soul grows deeper, until the union is rendered perfect with Love on one side, and sacrifice and prayer on the other, to weld the mystic tie.

Not only are the immediate needs of the soul regarded, not only the purifyings and the rapturous upliftings of the spirit affected, but cognisant of the boundlessness of the generosity of the Beloved, the loved one petitions for others and pleads for the world. In a seeming passivity there is action of the most intense kind; in an apparent calm there is deep rowing; and, in a death-like stillness, there is response most potent and life-giving.

The intimacy of union, which shall last through eons of bliss, has begun on earth. In love with love, in the highest sense, is that union begun and strengthened and carried on until all affections are subservient to this power, and worldly things as dross compared to this new splendor of existence. Earth is as a dark wall, since it keeps the soul from the brightness of Love's full glory, but by degrees it opens upon a path full of hope since it leads to the Uncreated Light of the Triune Deity.

This radiance, emanating from the ondrawing splendors of the Divine Love, and apparent in souls dowered by the Giver with the wealth of His light, was discernible all through the life of Sister Mary John Berchmans; even in her early years it appeared in her tender smile; and, in her later days, it shone with a beauty which left the beholder wondering, and seeking to fathom the source. She, who, in sickness and solitude, had built herself an anchor-hold, found that God had visited His spouse and that her retreat was full of the glory of His presence.

The little upper sacristy of the Convent, wherein she passed the last five years of her life, was her abiding place, and brought her close to the Tabernacle, and to the Love imprisoned there, until they said that she too, like Him, became a prisoner of love. Held by illness, and rendered inactive after a life of great activity, she spent her days in this little retreat and learned the secrets of the Master. She drank deeply of the mystic fountains of living beauty, and in turn, administered to others pure draughts of the sweetness bestowed on her own heart. Like the Mother of Sorrows the sword of sorrow had pierced her heart that out of other hearts "thoughts might be revealed." Many came to the little stronghold and went away consoled and strengthened. So the work went on, in silence and sacrifice, in power and love.

From her earliest years, it would seem that Christine O'Neill, or Sister Mary John Berchmans, as she was called later, was a chosen one. Before her birth, her mother—a deeply religious woman, one in whom the spirit seemed uppermost—had been assured in a dream, or vision, that this child would be a consolation to her, and give great glory to God. In speaking of this intelligence, so sacred to her, the mother declared that the first part of the prophecy had been accomplished, since her child had proved a consolation and blessing to her; and added that she believed that the last assurance, in some mysterious way, would also come true. Born two days before Christmas, the name Christine was given to her. This name was singularly appropriate, and the small follower of Christ began her career of walking in His ways very early. We are told that she was truly a Christmas child, sunny and affectionate, of disposition very attractive and lively.

There was always that beaming face, that pure open countenance; the kindly smile that evidenced a mind that knew no evil and could think no wrong. It would seem as if her charm might be summed up in the expression: the radiance of innocence. All through her girlhood that radiance was noticeable. People looked at her and admired her beauty of feature and coloring, and spoke of it, always adding, however, "but there is some-

thing else." One old man whose place of business she passed daily was heard to say, "It does me good to see her" and "I love her to come in if only for a moment. It makes the whole world different for me." Perhaps this was only Celtic exuberance and exaggeration, but many others were later on to express the same sentiment, in various ways. "When can we have you again?" "When are you coming back?" was heard as she was leaving any little gathering. Yet in all this, she was the happy, normal child, loving her work, diligent in her studies, eager in her play, and always anxious to help others.

When she reached home after school hours, there were the usual daily tasks awaiting her which were taken up cheerfully and ended quickly. All through her life there was a certain dispatch noticed about her duties. Whatever she was appointed to do must be done, and quickly. No loitering, no hesitancy, yet no unusual haste. It seemed a new sort of pleasure and she found the joy in accomplishment.

During her school days she had shown a certain clarity and even brilliancy of mind which was evidenced, in whatever she wrote, and said; but, apart from a certain tender playfulness and a winning, gentle frankness, there was nothing to show piquancy of wit, or flash of repartee or rejoinder. Perhaps a part of her charm was the fact that all

through her life—a student of human kind—she never indulged in criticisms of fellow beings, or threw blame or obloquy on others. Hers was a heart with entire absence of malice, with good will towards all. She was the kind of creature of whom the angels on that memorable morning sang in their song of gladness at the coming of Christ: "Glory to God; and, to men of *good will*—peace!"

CHAPTER II.

"Quis ascendet . . . ? aut quis stabit in loco sancto eius?"

T WAS, however, as a nun that the flowering time of Sister Mary John Berchmans appeared. If, during her early youth and girlhood her personality drew friends and strangers alike, and sent them rejoicing for a word, a sign, or even a look, this power over hearts was far more evident after she entered the Convent of the Holy Names. Though she left many sorrowing hearts behind who could not see why she should shroud herself in a cloister, nevertheless, once she had heard the voice—unmistakably clear—she followed the call. All through her girlhood, it seemed, it had whispered and she never closed her heart to its swaying insistence. That there was a conflict, one can easily imagine. The cup of pleasure presented to her lips was filled with all that a nature ardent of disposition and glowing with youth and beauty could desire. The grief of her mother affected her deeply, and she found it hard to leave her. This mother, who loved her daughter with a very deep and peculiar affection, said no word unless it were one of

encouragement, but the sorrow that she experienced by this parting was evidenced by every unconscious sign and act. The way was made steep and thorny for the young aspirant.

Once she had made the step and entered the portals of the Convent on the Lake, the Provincial House of the Sisters of the Holy Names, in Oakland, California, all troubles vanished, and all the obstacles placed in her path during the past months disappeared. She had come into her own. The Bridegroom seemed to have waited beneath the lintel of the door to lead her to His dwelling place and to the feast of joy there prepared.

Trials and cares might lengthen the days to come, but these first days, these happy hours, seemed like an enclosed Paradise, as she afterwards declared when she spoke of them. Everything was as if it had been arranged for her pleasure and all her tastes consulted. Her little tasks were so many joys and every call was to some new delight. "She was as happy as a bird!" As happy as a seraph would seem the more appropriate designation of her state of being, since, from the first, a supernatural expression seemed to imprint itself on her countenance. If she had been lovely before with the beauty of the deep brown eyes, the clear skin, and the rosy complexion that rugged health bestows, she was doubly so now with a something altogether new and unearthly

about her face. The life indoors had changed the olive of her complexion to a more delicate tint which rather enhanced her charms, and those who were used to her looked with new pride upon this transformed being, who now so full of joy, appeared before them, robed in the plain black dress and the short cape of the postulant.

How she appeared is best shown in this description by one of the school girls of that time, who is at present a Sister of Mercy:

"LIGHT REFLECTED

As members of the mystical body of Christ, every religious has some characteristic that is the manifestation of God's seal on her soul, designing her for some special work in His service. There are souls that seem to represent His hands, and have the consolation of helping in His work. Others are as His feet to follow His calls and go on His missions. Some there are who seem the sight of His eyes, in the way they see to fill His needs. There are those who are as His ears to hear the wail of the woeful and hearken to the cry for help. But there are other souls who seem to dwell more in the zone of His Heart, and act as reflectors of His divine attributes; to this class might be said to belong Sister Mary John Berchmans.

Her soul seems to have had the dual quality of both radiating and reflecting the love-light of His Heart in a spiritual diffusion. Those who have felt its influence proclaim its power and help in awakening in their hearts a yearning for the God-love that was hers. In her, the divine rays had a marked inward focusing; somewhat as the elements of the sun's rays are concentrated to form white light, so all the fair qualities of her soul finally blended to form the clear light of a very high spirituality.

This radiating and reflecting of the light of the Holy Spirit may be better illustrated in its action by examining the technique of the light-scheme used by Correggio in his painting of the Nativity. The cave shows sufficient natural light to distinguish the Holy Family; but this is eclipsed by the divine effulgence emitted from the Infant Christ. His radiance is shed strongest on the Blessed Mother, who, in turn, reflects it on the shepherds. His play of light, in its harmonious reactions, is a subtle way of revealing the divinity of the Light of the World, and the action of His Light on humanity, passed down through the ages. Sister Mary John Berchmans, as one of His chosen reflectors, reveals in her writings the light of the indwelling Christ, after whom she had been named Christine, as a sweet foreboding of the Christ-light that it was her mission to reflect.

As a girl at school, I had often watched the novices and postulants passing through the Convent garden on their way to the orchard for their recreation walk. One day the postulants were more closely together than usual, and I thought that they made a darksome group compared to the white-veiled novices. All at once, from the midst of the postulants, Sister Mary John Berchmans, then Sister Christine, turned to make a merry remark to one of her companions. Her wavy light brown hair caught the sunshine which made of it a burnished glory on her brow. Her face was all alight with playful smiles, caught between rosy cheeks and laughing eyes. It was only a momentary turn of the head, but I remember thinking that her face could be a synonym for "radiant," and by way of association of ideas, I have never written the word "radiant" without recalling the memory of that day.

THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT

One day while walking home from school, I met Sister Mary John Berchmans returning from the Branch House, where she had been teaching. I stopped for a moment to say a word, and, as I spoke, I was fairly startled by the light in her eyes. It was the sparkling of a light within that was flowing out. I thought of the crystal waters of

a brook sparkling in the sunlight. After that my idea of the difference between an ordinary woman and a nun was this presence of the light of the Spirit showing through at times. Just as the sight of running water will sometimes create a thirst, so this glimpse of the Spirit within gave me a thirst for the things of the Spirit.

While waiting to see a Sister in the Convent parlor, one Sunday afternoon, I noticed Sister Mary John Berchmans seated at the far end of the room with three visitors. I had always thought her beautiful, for she had the requirements of color and form to make that indisputable. But what impressed me on this occasion, was a certain celestial atmosphere that seemed part of her. Hers was a sort of spiritualized humanity that made me think of the Blessed Mother. The bend of the head, and the gentle, gracious affability, benign, and soulful. As I was alone and unobserved, I looked long, and tried to puzzle out the reason of this new light in her face. I did not know then what she mentions in her notes, that Our Lord had given her some of the attributes of His Mother.

THE LIGHT OF HIS WILL

One often hears the remark that the nuns always look the same. I had not seen Sister Mary John Berchmans for years, but on this visit I

found her greatly changed. She had still that characteristic, happy radiance in her face, but it was evident that her soul had gone through a spiritual sublimation. The moment that I greeted her, I became conscious of the working of the Divine Will. I felt that her will was moving in the Lord's Will.

It may have been that God let me see her in this new light on this occasion, for it was a memorable one. I was about to enter religion on the morrow, and I knew that my will might be my trial, but her example was now a helpful light to me, in the incident that followed. Just when I was enjoying so much my visit with the Sisters, a message came to say that Sister Mary John Berchmans was wanted. As it was a good-bye visit, and I was leaving—perhaps forever (as so it proved, for I never saw her again)—I demurred at her going. However, we arose to take leave. I knew that she wanted a word more with me, as I did with her. But I felt that every fibre of her being was bent on obeying her call, as every fibre of mine was in resenting it. But just as we reached the door, another message came, that Sister was to stay. She now turned back with the same pliant docility with which she was leaving. It must have been marked, because one of the Sisters laughingly remarked, "Go, and she goeth; come, and she cometh." When we were left alone, Sister said

something to me that has been an endless help, for on it my whole religious life seems to have been pivoted.

THE LIGHT OF SANCTITY

Father Sardi, S. J., Sister's spiritual director, always spoke with great admiration of her. When she died, he said in that earnest, emphatic way of his, "She was holy, very, very holy—so near to Our Lord. She did not need a book for meditation, ah, no!" He seemed to be thinking a great deal more than he said.

Sister Mary John Berchmans seems to have been one of those fortunate religious who have succeeded in acquiring the habit of entering into the soul by interior recollection, and in that practice, attained to a consciousness of the in-abiding Presence. In her writings, Sister handles the intricacies of the divine union with an exquisite simplicity. Her subjective analysis of the workings of the Holy Spirit in her soul shows an understanding and an intimacy that reveals her high degree of union. Her spiritual reaction will be impressed most deeply on souls who have a desire of this divine indwelling and who seek the joys of the interior life.

Her notes show the wonders of the hidden glories of the soul and the delights of union and

contemplation. The words of her much Beloved Spouse, "One thing is necessary," seem to be stressed in her, in a way to stimulate others to a clearer light, and by so doing, to make the world less desolate for Him who has complained that 'No man thinketh in his heart.' "

From the first, as her Mistress of Novices once said, Sister esteemed her rule. Every little part was maintained in its integrity. She was scrupulous in her obedience and adherence to duty in the smallest item. When later she received the name of John Berchmans, the lover of the common life, she was delighted. Some few years later we found this passage among her retreat notes: "St. John Berchmans was canonized just for keeping his rules." And on the same page, "An interior soul does more for God's glory in one day than a tepid religious in a whole year." "There is no holiday from the Rules." "I must lead a crucified, self-denying life, since I am the sworn spouse of Christ." Again, "I must die to self at every moment." "I must aim at perfection by keeping the Rules." "The perfection of the parts is the perfection of the whole."

One can readily see how such a one would advance rapidly along a path made luminous by thousands of holy lovers of Christ. Later on, the personal love of Christ would be her guide. Now,

at the outset, her desire for perfection, especially in small things, was very noticeable. The following words show how much she esteemed this great work of religious perfection: "As a religious, and especially as a religious of the Holy Names, I have sworn at the foot of God's altar to acquire perfection. Now our dear Lord says, 'If thou will be perfect, follow Me'; and, again, 'If thou wilt follow Me, deny thyself and take up thy cross.' Thus, as a natural sequence, I may, I must, become perfect, by denying myself and taking up my daily cross after Christ. Faithfulness in little things, and perfect obedience to the Rules will insure my perfection." It is like a refrain running through a beautiful poem, giving strength and sweetness to the whole.

One thing else was very noticeable in her from her very earliest years, even before she reached the Novitiate, or had left her father's house. This was her love for others, her charity towards all. After her tender and confiding love of God, this was most evident. She loved every one, and therefore it is not remarkable that everyone loved her. These few words from her note-book will confirm her love for charity towards others. "Advice given on the eve of my final profession by the Reverend Father Director: 'In all your life make it a practice never to say an uncharitable word either to the Sisters or to outsiders. Always say a kind

word, whenever you can get an opportunity, for everybody and about everybody.' " "That advice," she writes, "has often been given in different ways and in various places; yet never did it strike me more forcibly or impel me with so ardent a desire to excel in its accomplishment. It remains for me to practise it, D. V." Those who knew her most intimately can bear witness to the perfection with which she practised this virtue of charitableness towards her neighbors through all her life. Especially as a religious was she most careful to refrain from any word, even the slightest, against others. When she could say no good word at the time on account of serious circumstances, she either refrained from even a word, or began to tell some kind act wrought by the said person at some other time. In all this there was no stiffness, no apparent effort or self-consciousness. Yet Sister Mary John Berchmans was as lovable as ever. Her vivid personality shone with as tender a light and her charm appeared in all her actions, because in her strivings after high and holy things she never lost an intense interest in everything human. As a young girl this universal love of her kind had endeared her to all. Now as a religious, safe, as it were, from false imputations, her fervor went out to all; great and little, the old and the young. Her heart seemed boundless, and to have as many chambers as the celebrated Escorial of the

Spaniards, where each new entrant was as well received as the last. All felt the same fire and were warmed at the same hearth.

After her first profession, when she had pronounced her vows, she was sent to San Francisco, to her own Alma Mater, the Convent of the Holy Names, on Tenth Street, there to undertake some classes in St. Rose's, an outside parochial school; and, later on, to remain at St. Joseph's. It was here at St. Joseph's, in reality, that her life work was accomplished. For more than fifteen years she labored among the pupils, and her influence for good was enormous. As an instructor she succeeded admirably, for she was what we style "the born teacher," with a great love for the profession, and therefore one who accomplished results above the ordinary. Not only was she successful in imparting knowledge of various kinds, since the curriculum embraced many subjects, but she imprinted a moral character in her pupils that seemed to remain. Years after, one of her girls was heard to say, "Sister John Berchmans did more for me than any one else in my whole life. Her influence is felt in every one of my actions. Her words still ring in my ears and I can see that smile as if she were here present. I am in the world to-day, mingling with all classes of society, and, because of Sister, I can say this with truth: I feel that I am like a nun, walking through the

daily rounds of my duties." Afraid to be misunderstood, she hastened to add, "It is not of my own strength that I live my life in such a way, or that I have tried to make it pleasing to God; but it is through Sister that I have learned. After I left school, Sister Mary John Berchmans drew up for me a 'Rule of Life' which she wished me to follow. I did so for some time, until further duties compelled me to change some things; but to this day her rules and her maxims are mine." And this young woman declared that her sentiments about Sister Mary John Berchmans' influence were the sentiments of all the girls of her classes and of many of those who came in contact with Sister at some time or other.

Once, meeting a young girl at Sunday school, she asked her if she would not like to come to the Convent where she could be taught to know and love God. The young girl, attracted, as she herself declared afterwards, by the nun whom she saw, more than by the desire of holy things which she saw not, created a certain furore at home (for one of her parents held an official position which made advisable the attendance of the children at one of the public schools), when she declared that she must go to the Convent school. She succeeded, at last, and was to the end a devoted pupil of Sister Mary John Berchmans. At the present writing, she is a nun of the Sisters of the Holy Names, a

successful teacher herself, and cherishes the memory of the one who reached out to place her in the house of the Lord. She is but one of many who, guided by the same warm affection of Sister Mary John Berchmans, became as it were, a band of chosen ones all trained under the same guiding hand. God blessed the work and caused the same charm of manner which had so fascinated the men and women of the world to become a spiritual beacon to direct the steps of these children into the paths of Divine Love.

Among her many duties at St. Joseph's, Sister was given charge of a Sodality of girls which, in time, was extended to include the young ladies of the parish, and was known as the Society of the Children of Mary. A room large enough to accommodate the numbers, yearly augmented by new recruits, was tastily fitted up, and weekly meetings were held. At first, the young ladies filed in on Sunday afternoons, but from the fact that many of them were girls employed during the week, with Sunday only for a holiday, certain evenings were also appointed when they assembled. Sister Mary John Berchmans became sister and mother, confidant and friend to all. Not only did these young ladies come with willingness to the regular meetings, but many, wishing to have a word with Sister, anent some private matter for soul or body, came at other times. They were always wel-

come, always kindly received, always went away refreshed in spirit, and happy.

Sister seemed to have no leisure. As soon as one thing was accomplished for their good, another demanding her attention or sympathy was under way. She found out that many of them were not thoroughly educated; that some had not taken advantage of early opportunities; and realized that the course of events would throw them aside, unless these gaps in their education were filled. Sister started a night-class in addition to her other work; and, on certain evenings, these young, ambitious girls brought their difficulties to her. They were slowly enriched by the knowledge that came to them, and, like Nicodemus who sought the Light by night, they, too, found salvation as well as consolation in their studies. They were bound more closely together by the common admiration and love with which their directress inspired them and it seemed like one great family, where souls were gradually brought nearer to God.

It was at the yearly reunions that this "family spirit" showed itself, and where they manifested their sincere affection for the leader of the group. One must remember that these were young girls who had, for the most part, left school some years before. They were gay and sometimes deeply imbued with the spirit of the world. Some few of them were even leaders of society in their

own little sets; others holding honorable and responsible positions; while others, again, were striving towards some profession, or eminence. Yet, when they entered the old "Sodality Hall," they became like children, home again to indulge in fun and frolic. The laughter rang out as stories were told of some humorous incident, as the gleeful note was added to the conversation at the expense of some luckless impulse. Some were glad to display their talents, and music, recitations and song enlivened the afternoon, and early evening. In the midst of it all was Sister, like a queen among her subjects. To say that they almost worshipped her would be no exaggeration. One, who was present as a visiting Sister, has declared that she had seen many gatherings of pupils, but none where the love feast was in such evidence. On Sister's side there was always that absence of self, that direct concern for others, that acknowledged love for each and all.

Year after year, the Novitiate across the Bay was augmented by members of the Society. These young girls, studying the secrets of the religious life, became ardent disciples of the Master, and, in turn, spread the light of His doctrine among the little ones of their care, assisting others by the help rendered them by their beloved teacher and friend. Not only were young girls assisted and made good members of society, or formed,

as it were, into angels for the cloister, but sometimes the boys who served on the altar came under her influence. One of these, who later became a zealous priest, said, with deep feeling, when some one spoke of her as a teacher, and a holy religious: "But for Sister Mary John Berchmans, I should not be a priest to-day. I have always thought, for many reasons, that I owe my vocation and perseverance to her efforts, and to her prayers."

Another, a Jesuit, eminent for his success in retreats and in directing many towards the higher life, said that he owed much to her example and to her influence. When her notes, written during her last years, were, at his earnest request, given to him to read, he said that he was not surprised at what they revealed; and that he had learned to know much of her work through the girls she had influenced and taught.

That the thought of winning souls for Christ was of paramount importance in Sister's mind we see from these lines taken from her note-book:

"We have large desires of doing something great and noble before death calls us. We get blinded by the world's illusions. Our minds are filled with the tawdry ideas that pass from mouth to mouth, and we begin to think that we must do something big, something worth-living-for. If, as

nearly always happens, we never perform those chimerical, so called great things, we experience heart-yearnings, soul-strivings after—we know not what. And all the time the great work is at our doors. The fields are white for the harvest, and the need of action is beating into our very lives. The noble work for which Christ lived is surely not too low or too little for us. It is the very noblest end that man could have for himself and his neighbor—this helping for time and eternity the human race for which Christ died.

"When we hear of famous scientists or leaders in one field or another, let us remember that in union with Christ we are doing incomparably greater work than these eminent ones, considered merely as earthly workers.

"We must reproduce Christ in our lives—bring out His image in us. *Alter Christus. We must be other Christs!*"

CHAPTER III.

"Quis ascendet in montem Domini? Innocens manibus et mundo corde."

LL THROUGH THIS TIME Sister Mary John Berchmans' spiritual progress had gone steadily on. She practised what is called the "Presence of God" and all her words and actions underwent a scrutiny as under the all-seeing Eye of the Master. Among her Retreat papers we find the following: "After I had laid my soul open to the Director (a holy and learned Jesuit) giving him a knowledge of my character, its defects and its tendencies, he said, 'Take the presence of God as your aim, and you will succeed. All that you desire to acquire, and all that you wish to eradicate, shall be accomplished.' " She continues with her spirit of docility, "With God's help, I shall practise the presence of God," adding the text, " 'Walk before Me and be perfect.' " She then goes on to write: "Thais, the courtesan, in three years, and Dositheus, in five years, became great saints by the exercise of the Divine Presence."

A little while before this, she had written what shows her abiding and deep love for the Blessed

Sacrament, the legacy of the Man-God to his fellow men: "I have made a compact with the angels and saints of the Court of Heaven, that since Jesus is sacramentally present in my heart, sometimes four and five times a week,* dwelling there until the Sacred Species are consumed, and then remaining there by His grace—that since I am the Temple of God, and where God is, that is Heaven—they and our Blessed Mother remain constantly in my heart, adoring my God, offering Him incessantly acts of praise, homage, thanksgiving, or reparation for my sins, the sins of the world, praying that His glory may be extended especially by me and by our community; making up to Him, by the glory that they give Him, for all the glory I have not given, or may have been the means of keeping from Him; praying also for the needs of our community, the wants of the Church, and my perseverance. This I ask them to do with me and for me, since I cannot always keep my mind fixed on my God, Who is present with me, and never to cease until I go to meet my God in Heaven. When I revert in thought by an act of the Presence of God, I see them making room for me, joining with me in prayer, and then continuing their homage and adoration in my absence. A. M. D. G."

*It was before the decree of Pope Pius X concerning daily Communion, and so Communion was not so frequently allowed.

That she had naturally a spiritual bent and was drawn easily to prayer, no one could doubt who knew her. During the Thirty Days' Retreat when self-examination seems necessary and she began to search Jerusalem with lamps, we find the following written in her note book, indicating her earnestness about perfection: "The virtues that attract me most, and that spring from my disposition are: Union with God, Love of Prayer, and Recollection. I go to God very easily, but almost too naturally, by following them out. I mean that there is not enough self-conquest required. I tend to go there. It would be to the *glory* of God, but not to the greater glory of God. I must, although it is not natural, practise purity of intention, all for God. Self out of sight. *Ad majorem Dei gloriam.*"

On the third day of that retreat when the Use of Creation was the subject of the conference, we find her scourging her soul with the thoughts that come swiftly: "My God, make me understand and realize in my everyday life the right order of things. God first, and creatures only as a means to that end."

In other notes she goes on to say, "I have chosen to combat my predominant fault, and obtain *Purity of Intention*: To do everything and think everything for the *greater glory of God;* not *merely for the glory of God,* or to let self get a

share. In the morning I shall make my intention; then if I see self-glorification gliding in, or if it has done so, to purify and renew my intention to go on, remembering the presence of God." Again she writes: "If our conversation were more elevated, more on spiritual subjects, Jesus would be with us and give us more light at meditation, and make our hearts glow with love. Even with the pupils we should strive to bring in some little word of spiritual things. Jesus will enlighten their minds to understand. I am going to try never to let a conversation pass, especially with the pupils, without some word, however brief, of spiritual things; or that which tends that way." Her pupils still testify to the sincerity of this resolution, and many have spoken of her conversations, always so full of God and of His love and goodness. One young girl, who had the happiness to serve her in many ways, and who was with her much, said that Sister had taught her to know God and to comprehend truths of religion in such a way as she could never otherwise have learned these things. "A great part of the spiritual life was laid open to me, and though I could not follow, I was made the better for the knowledge."

Self was daily pushed out of sight. It was always the greater glory of God. All must be submerged in the love of the Divine Master. A few years after her profession, her mother whom she

so tenderly cherished, died; and although the grief of her heart was known to be intense, it was noticed that she shed no tears. When some one remarked on her strength she said simply, "She," meaning her mother, "would be scandalized." Her mother, it is true, had once said, on seeing her daughter burst into tears at the thought of that mother's death: "A nun does not weep; she controls herself." The friends at the bedside had protested and had striven to change the patient's idea, but the dying mother knew the strength of her child's mind, and had no need to revoke her words. Sister was never seen to cry afterwards, even under the most trying circumstances; and, although she had a most tender heart, never made any manifestations of passion or grief. "Self must be curbed," seemed to serve as a watchword. Certainly the Lord had begun to work in this soul, naturally one of the most loving and affectionate, and known and loved for her great tenderness, but which would grow stronger day by day through her Love.

We have heard that "Tho' the mills of the gods grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small," and we know that "Whom He loveth He chasteneth." The Heart of God through many hours of sacrifices, great and small, was trying the soul of this favored one and causing her to grow daily more in conformity with His own.

Suffering had begun to mark her as one of the elect. A crucified Christ demands ever a crucified spouse, and weakness and weariness were, at length, to drag at the steps that were bent towards Calvary's height. The shadows of sickness were thrown across the bright days, and the radiant smile sometimes had a faint suspicion of the sigh in the heart. The delicate heart that sought to give out love to all was bruised a little, but in the opening wounds she hid her God, and smiled. This constant effort and sacrifice, this death to self, this surrender to the exact requirements of each small duty, together with her daily class work, and all the extraneous and manifold calls on her patience, told on her at last. The toll was heavy, and must be paid. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life." A series of colds which culminated in pneumonia, held direful results, which were manifested in the enforced action of the heart. When a physician was consulted, he declared that the outer lining of the heart had been "worn out" by the excessive beating; but that an immediate rest from all work might prolong her life for a few years. She must prepare to give up teaching, and all the things that made up the daily routine. She must discard the many useless things which her spiritual advancement had outgrown. There was left for her only to say, *"Fiat!"*

Yet it was unto a new life that she was being ushered. New experiences were to be granted that would lift her aspiring soul to a rapid growth in holiness. The adventures of the knights of old took them into strange lands and unknown paths where they performed deeds of valor for the help or safety of mankind. Her questing was to be a great adventure. God had plans for this soul, which had grown very dear to Him, and it was evident that "He would lead her into the wilderness and speak to her heart." He would lead her by the hand through the great roads of sickness and sorrow, of hardships and trials; but the quest was worthy of His guidance. For her part, she had girded herself and was ready. In a short time, as to years, she had accomplished much. Her strength of soul had been evidenced by her love of her vocation, her devotion to her rule, her desire for perfection, and her death to self. Above all else had appeared her love for the young girls whose characters she had helped to strengthen, and her success in training them to advance along the way of strict adherence to the principles of duty. All for the *greater glory of God* had been the aspiration of her days; and now, that same Father Whom she loved so well, was to show her—not the joy of earth—but the peace of Heaven. Her conquest of self must be complete; her knowledge of the new country of the soul

augmented; her victory secure. Like a knight, accoutred in panoply of war, did she go forth in confidence and unswerving faith. The shadow of the valley of death might encompass her at times and the way proved toilsome and dreary; but the sunshine of the heights would appear and the glory of the King shine out before her to give the impulse for greater effort and nobler deed.

"Who is this that cometh up from the desert, leaning on her Beloved?" she asked later on, in allusion to Mary's Assumption into Heaven. Now to her soul must be shown the new way and the upward path over whose heights she must pass "leaning on the Beloved."

CHAPTER IV.

"Hic accipiet benedictionem a Domino; et misericordiam a Deo salutari suo."

HEN, THEREFORE, the verdict had gone forth that Sister Mary John Berchmans must lay aside her arduous and various labors until her strength be renewed, great consternation was the result in "old Tenth Street," where she had taught almost from the beginning of her religious life. She had been principal, class-teacher, teacher of singing, of oral instruction, and, above all, directress of the Children of Mary, and how could all these duties, with their manifold cares, slip from her shoulders at once? What would they do, those who had depended on her for so long? There was consternation among the pupils at first. When, however, it was rumored that unless Sister took her vacation soon and suspended all work for a time, there would be little chance of her ever resuming her ordinary work and returning to those who loved her so well, everything was changed. Anxious to further the plans of Superiors, who had every reason to believe that the repeated attacks of an insidious disease had already begun to undermine a once splendid constitution, Sisters, pupils, and

friends bowed in submission to the evident will of God.

She had been "the angel of the school" to them, and her place could not easily be filled. She had loved and served them all faithfully and without faltering. She had never spared herself in her duty, and they loved her and showed their love in many ways. The girls of Tenth Street, especially noted as they have been all through the years for their loyalty and unselfish devotion to their teachers, felt her departure keenly. The priests of the parish also lamented the fact that a great factor for good was being taken from this center of activity and learning.

One of these priests, devoted as the others, and like them remarkable for his powerful influence and zeal for souls, showed his appreciation of her work in a letter which reached Sister Mary John Berchmans after she had gone to the sunny South, in hopes of regaining her lost vigor. The writer, who later became Bishop of one of the dioceses of California, was the Pastor *pro tem.* of St. Joseph's parish in San Francisco. When, at the suggestion of the former Pastor, Reverend P. Scanlon, the Society of the Children of Mary had become a parish affair, his assistant curate was appointed director. Through the duties which devolved upon him, he was in the best possible position to know the work and the efforts of Sister

Mary John Berchmans; to value her influence over the young women of the parish, and to appreciate, as none other, their intrinsic worth. This letter, coming from one who writes as Pastor more than friend, touched Sister's humility very deeply, and she was loath to take to herself what it contained of eulogy and gratitude. Its eloquence speaks for itself, and the appreciation disclosed here reveals a nobility of character and generosity of feeling in the writer, seldom met with here below in the hurrying ranks of the toilers of the harvest.

"Dear Sister Berchmans:

"As you are now resting quietly in your mountain retreat, filling your lungs with purest air, I take the liberty to write you a few words which I would have spoken gladly before your departure, but could not. Aware that your stay in the South may be prolonged for eight or ten months, and as no one can tell what changes may take place here on the appointment of a successor to our dear departed Pastor, I feel it a duty to express to you my deep sense of gratitude for the splendid work you did at Tenth Street during the last ten or twelve years.

"When I came to St. Joseph's you had already established your work and endeared yourself to the children and priests of the parish, especially to the late lamented Pastor. Would that his noble spirit could speak and act! How different the testimony to your merit would be! For the rest I speak from my own observation. To begin with, in that work to which you devoted the best years of your religious life, the education of these young girls, it would seem in my poor judgment that you had few equals. I have met many teachers, but few educators in the full sense of that much abused word. It is one thing to store the mind with facts and dates and rules and such like; it is another and far more difficult to insinuate oneself into the souls of others, to elevate their thoughts, to fill their minds with true motives and high ideals—in a word, to cultivate the soul so that it may become a rich treasure for the greater glory of God and the ennoblement of life. To exercise this salutary influence over others in a lasting degree, the teacher must possess not only a highly gifted mind, but also deep religious conviction. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' The fruit of your teaching is the best evidence of your greatness as an educator. You have sent into the world, and into the cloister, young girls who could do credit to any institution in the country. For tenderness and goodness of heart, for delicacy of feeling, for

womanly integrity, for unaffected intelligence, the graduates of St. Joseph's School cannot be surpassed.

"I realize, of course, that the foundation of your work was laid by the devoted Sisters, and if the foundation is not well laid the superstructure can never be thoroughly perfected; nevertheless, the all-important period of the life of a pupil is that between sixteen and twenty; to cultivate a taste for the good and true, is then, more than at any other time, the burden of the teacher. To accomplish it successfully there must be intellect, faith, love, and a deep-flowing fervor of enthusiasm to bring out in each soul what is highest and best. These qualities may be possessed by others, but there are degrees, and it was the intensity with which they shone forth in you that accounts for your splendid success. One has only had to witness the trusting manner in which these children have ever crowded around you, and for years clung to you for direction and support as the ivy clings to the tree. What is this but the result of a personality as sweet as it is unique! During your years in the class room, few, if any, have gathered such a harvest of affection and devotion. Not one child have I met but felt it was a blessing to be your pupil and a privilege to have a place in your heart.

"But your work of usefulness was not confined to the school room. You had qualities that well

fitted you for another important work; i. e., for the direction of the Young Ladies' Sodality. From causes into which it is needless to enter, its members had dwindled away, till not more than seventy active members remained. It is always easier to build up a new than to reconstruct an old association. But you were an optimist and with courage and zeal faced the difficulty. Your reward came in due time. You have left after you a flourishing sodality, the influence of which is felt in many a Catholic home. The world at large may be ungrateful, but I do not hesitate to say that the 'Children of Mary' will not soon forget you. Your tender words of advice, and the beautiful lessons so sweetly inculcated, will live in their souls like music that can never be forgotten. Your personality, so childlike in its frankness and sincerity, so gentle, yet not without determination and strength, so cheerful that the lingering shadows of weariness and world-care disappeared in its presence, so free from chilling conventionality that each girl felt perfectly at ease in your company, has left its influence on their lives and will still spread to their souls, like the silent but intelligent care of their guardian angels. And in the days that are before them, the thought of what you are, and the memory of the beautiful example you gave them will arouse their consciousness to the spir-

itual realities, which too often become dulled in the ups and downs of life.

"Now, dear Sister, you may regret the classroom where young minds grew strong in truth, and young hearts expanded under the mighty influence of a noble teacher; the Sodality Hall, where young ladies under your prudent guidance cheerfully learned to follow the Master along the *'Via Crucis'*; and the beautiful little Chapel where daily your pure soul enjoyed the sweetness of true love; nevertheless, I hope the remembrance of all these will be your greatest consolation during the months you are away from the scenes of your enduring labors. One thing be assured of—we shall pray God that the sweet breath of the orange groves and the pure air of the Southland may soon restore your former strength, that you may again return, to be a blessing to our children, and to shed new lustre on the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary."

That fond hope was never realized. Sister Mary John Berchmans never taught again in the old class room at St. Joseph's. Her days of teaching were practically over. She was sent South to the Convent at Ramona, Los Angeles, and there, owing to the great care of the Superior in charge of the Convent, she seemed to thrive. The "sweet breath of the orange groves," and the soft breezes for a time seemed to impart new vigor;

and health appeared in her heightened color and energetic movements. She enjoyed everything. The daily rambles and excursions were a source of untold delight, and the company of one of her friends who was stationed at the time at Ramona Convent, made everything doubly pleasurable. One of her own sisters, who was also a Sister of the Holy Names, and greatly attached to her, was teaching at that time in the South. Many visits were interchanged, and the Sisters were very grateful for the arrangements made for their mutual happiness.

The following extracts from her letters speak of these first days of relaxation:

"Surely Spring is here, whatever season it is in the North. I lift up my eyes and see from my window the hills and fields covered with green, the rich young green of the springtime. It is not all the same green here. There are spots of a deep olive tint and ranging from that to the light tender color of the new spring grass. A few days ago there were gleams of the brown earth showing through; but, much to my sorrow, the warm vivid brown is hidden now. You should see the lights and shadows on the slopes of the hills!

"Do you conclude that I am becoming enamored of this place? I always thought it beautiful, but I fear that 'my heart is in the Highlands.' "

Later on, when one of the Sisters was suffering greatly from asthma, and it was thought that a change of air might benefit her, Sister was sent, with other convalescents, to the mountains. The grandeur of the scenery appealed to Sister's beauty-loving nature, and she spent some happy days there among the pines. However, her breathing was very labored and it was impossible for her to walk any distance. All these latter signs were attributed to the high altitude, but the lesion of the heart had begun to assert itself. Her cheerfulness, however, was still her strong quality, and she found joy in everything. She read, she wrote letters when she was allowed to write, and she marvelled at God's wonderful out-of-doors continually. The following thoughts from her letters give some idea of that period. They also show her delight in the company of others, and in receiving news from her dear ones.

"I wish and pray for you, what is better than mirth, a happiness deep and rich, a peace so fair and beautiful that only angels could tell us of it at first. We have somehow learned their song; and now, our human lips, when the heart loves, can prayerfully utter the refrain. Health and strength forms another portion of my desires for you. I would leave unsaid almost the best part of my wishes for your happiness, if I omitted saying that I pray for all good things for those you love."

The letter that follows was written just after the terrible earthquake and fire in San Francisco of April 18, 1906. Sister was naturally very much concerned about the welfare of the people and young girls connected with St. Joseph's:

"First of all, and before all, I must ask you to write to me to tell me how you are, and what has happened to all your relations and friends. My poor dear child, how you must have suffered during that seemingly unending period of destruction and desolation! And then I realize that your story of fright was or is that of every one of dear old San Francisco's inhabitants.

"How we longed and hungered for news of our dear old city! We lived from one newspaper edition to the other. Then when it came, we devoured its contents. I was saying that I never understood why our dear Lord wept over the City of Jerusalem because of its impending destruction. I could understand His weeping over souls and their sins, but for the city—that woke no responsive chord. Now I realize and understand. Yes, *I cried over* the loss of our dear old city. There were days when my eyes and my heart seemed to be the home of tears. Then I took refuge in the chapel. I could see you all, or at least I thought I could. I know that you are saying that my wildest imaginings fail to touch the shadow of the blackness and gloom of your valley of desolation. Yet as

far as possible our thoughts were united with you all. Thank God! You are safe."

That vacation Sister Mary John Berchmans attended the Convention of the Sisters in Los Angeles (1906), was able to remain long hours in the lecture hall, and seemed to have regained all her old-time vigorous health. She was in her element. She enjoyed the lectures, the meetings with the Sisters, and the long discussions over ways and means of better teaching and instruction.

The Community therefore thought her sufficiently well to undertake the class, for which she had been chosen substitute before. Sister went into the work with might and main. Whatever she attempted must be done thoroughly. In fact, the last part of her vacation, after the strenuous Convention, was taken up with the study of a new language which must be mastered.

All her spare time was given to that, and to a review of the sciences to be taught. Therefore, the best part of the days and some of her nights went into this thorough and conscientious preparation. She found time for a letter or two to one of her dear children, who had written imploring her for news of herself, but not many others were written during this time.

Sister Mary John Berchmans had also fallen heir to the singing classes, and the teaching of oral expression, and much time and attention had to

be given to these arts. Physically it taxed her greatly—the long standing, the frequent revision, and rehearsal of difficult work; all this told greatly on her newly-acquired strength.

At last the penalty was paid. After a rehearsal of a particularly tedious nature, Sister Mary John Berchmans was carried, half fainting, to her bed, from which one might say she never rose. Never, at least, for any length of time; and, except for a little First Communion Class, never to teach again. It was the second chapter of her illness.

After days of untold suffering it was thought best to have Sister Mary John Berchmans removed to Oakland Convent Infirmary. Too weak to walk, or to remain in a sitting posture, she was conveyed in a reclining chair and placed in a baggage car of the Southern Pacific train, since the Pullman cars reached only to Los Angeles, thirty miles away. When the train drew in at Shorb Station, the Sisters from Ramona Convent, who had learned of her leaving, crowded around her. With tears and smiles they greeted her and lovingly tried to approach her. It was only for a few moments. She lay there, smiling as usual, and trying to say some words of greeting and farewell to each. "We knew that it was for the last time," one of them prophetically said afterwards in relating the scene, adding: "and everyone was melted to tears."

The train went on, with its joltings and backings; all of which meant torture to the poor strained heart of the sufferer—now the chief source of trouble. The little Sister who had charge of her on that journey declared afterwards that several times during the night she thought Sister Mary John Berchmans would breathe her last! She also lovingly testified to the infinite patience and cheerfulness of Sister, and her concern for her companion's distress.

Sister Mary John Berchmans had taken up the Cross again. She was on her way to Calvary, and the way was rough; but so was the road that One other had trod, and every thought was centered on following Him closely; and of doing, not her own will, but the inscrutable Will of Him Who loved her, and Whom she loved so well.

She arrived in Oakland in a state of exhaustion, and for hours lay motionless and silent, gasping for breath. Hour after hour went by, and still Sister lay with no power to move. The slightest effort was unendurable. As the afternoon wore on, everything was done that was possible for the relief of the sufferer. At length, towards evening a little relief came. Sister smiled—a wan, wintry smile, it is true, which tore at the heart of the waiting Sisters almost more than the silence—and the breathing became a little more regular.

When this attack had run its course, Sister rallied quickly enough, and day by day grew stronger. The joy of life came back to her; the happy words of greeting, of thanks, and thought for others, were again apparent. Her happiness at being in the Provincial House—at "coming home"—was very great. The very routine, the old customs, the hours of recreation, the feast days of the Mothers and of the Sisters, the hours of silence, and of prayers and meditation—all this was new life and joy to her. Although there was no thought of trying to follow the regular exercises of the House, still the Infirmary has its own regulations, and no one was ever more assiduous in her compliance with them than Sister Mary John Berchmans. It was her delight to unite herself with the Community, in spirit, during prayer, or during the recitation of the Office of the Blessed Virgin; but, during the periods when speech was allowed, no one enjoyed the time more. She loved to have the Sisters visit her, and never spared herself in welcoming and entertaining them. They, on their part, loved to come to speak of their affairs, or duties, or to ask her prayers.

Sister Mary John Berchmans had returned from the shadow of the grave, and at last was considered strong enough to leave her bed. She was lifted to the wheel chair and thence to the Sacristy, whence she could look out into the

Chapel. Her joy was almost childlike, yet a certain intensity in her joyousness told of a deep and wonderful feeling, something like exaltation. She could make her way to the Chapel! She would no longer be debarred from Mass! Holy Communion had been hers almost from the beginning of her arrival, and only the most intense suffering prevented her from receiving her Lord each morning; but to be able to *hear Mass daily,* and to visit her Lord in the Blessed Sacrament during the day! It was indeed new life, after months of deprivation. Thus she became acquainted with the "Little Sacristy," which was to be her dwelling place during five long years. Her visits grew so frequent that she became, as it were, an inmate of the "Upper Room," or the "Little Sacristy," and another "prisoner of love." The anchoress had built herself a hermitage, wherein she might shut out the world and give herself more freely to the Divine Bridegroom, Who daily drew her more and more closely to Himself. Sometimes, Sister's strength would allow her for a time to join the ranks of the Sisters and go down into the Chapel, but it was never for any length of time. The going up and down stairs were tortuous exercises generally, and had to be given up for her former ways in the "Little Sacristy." There she was at home and in her place; and there the Divine secrets were whispered to her.

When the time for the annual retreat came, of course Sister Mary John Berchmans was unable to enter on any of the exercises. The following notes were found in her little retreat book and give some idea of her spirit of reverence for the Will of God. Her own words are followed by this "Act of Submission," and the beautiful prayer of Abbé Perryvre to Our Lady, showing her need of pity, of hope, and of peace from the divine sources.

ANNUAL RETREAT, FR. SARDI, S. J., JULY, 1907

"For a time I thought that I might go 'beyond the stars,' but I know now that I am not good enough. I must wait and work until 'all things are ready.' Dear Lord, it would have been such a comfort, such a rest to lay down the burden, if only You *had* called. Then it would have been Your will, and to do Your will is always best and highest.

"I accept life because it is Your will. I make my offering with the same sentiments as when entering, or on making my final vows. As then, I dared to make the words of Your beautiful oblation mine, so now I repeat: 'Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not, neither were they pleasing to Thee; then said I, 'Behold I come to do Thy will,

O my God!' In the head of the book it is written of me, I come to do Thy Will.'

"As You know, dear God, I had thought to make my offering less unworthy of Your acceptance by uniting it to the offering Christ made of Himself. Now, as then, I wish to give You all the glory possible. If it were possible, in all reverence, I would renew the supreme glory and satisfaction Christ gave You at the Incarnation. I do not know in what way Your will is to be made manifest. Suffice that it is Your will. I submit. Let me do all the good You design for me. Do not let me be unfaithful or deaf to any grace. In the childish way I put it when entering, I want to do some good for You before I die. So now the child of to-day with a few more years, a few more scars, repeats the old prayer, 'I want to do some good for You before I die.'

"I do not know if I shall regain my former health and strength; or, if I shall become well enough to be a semi-burden on the Community. You know all, dear Lord; give me grace to bear, as well as to do. *I have fought it out.* Now, 'I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me.' His grace is sufficient for me, I know, but dear Lord, there will come times—! To take up life again! but to take it up in this fashion—! 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

ACT OF SUBMISSION

"Lord! I know not what to ask of Thee.

"Thou alone knowest what I need.

"Thou knowest me better than I can know myself. Father, give to Thy Child that which she knows not how to ask. I dare not seek either for crosses, or consolations. I present myself before Thee. I lay open to Thee my heart. Behold its necessities and act according to Thy mercies. Strike or cure, raise up or cast down, I adore Thy divine will without knowing it. I sacrifice and abandon myself entirely to Thee. I have no other desire, but that at all times, under all circumstances, and in all places, I may perfectly accomplish Thy divine will."

PRAYER TO OUR LADY

"In the midst of thy glory, O Holy Virgin, do not forget the sorrow of earth. Cast a look of compassion on those who suffer, on those who struggle against difficulties, and who taste continually the bitterness of this life. Have pity on those who are separated from their friends, on those who are sad of heart. Cast a look of compassion on those who love, and on those who are anxious of soul. Have pity on those who weep, and on those who pray. Increase our faith. Give to all hope and peace. Amen."—*Abbé Perryvre.*

Further extracts from letters of Sister Mary John Berchmans, written about this time appear here:

"On Saturday, the vigil of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, you were constantly in my thoughts, far more so than usual. Were your prayers especially heard for me, or was it the concurrence of the two events, *our* day (the anniversary of their entrance into religion), Our Lady's Day, and the vigil of her most beautiful Feast? It made for me a forecasting of light that belonged to the feast itself! I suppose the fringes of light slipped over into the day before and the days following.

"Once in the long ago I was made a Child of Mary on that, the happiest day of my life. Then I entered on a recurring day of the 'White Feast'; and again, last year I received Holy Communion for the *'first time' in bed* on the Eighth of December. Do not smile at this last. The sensation, the impression of receiving Our Lord for the first time after an illness, is almost beyond words, though not beyond tears. I cannot explain the feeling one experiences when the Lord comes thus. I know, with me, it was a tremulous sensation of love and utter humility. A feeling that caused the tears to well up and overflow even, when I was in the act of receiving and welcoming the sweet Lord into

this house of mine. Perhaps *I* felt that way because of my unworthiness.

"Oh, I wish you could have been here for many reasons on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. But this is the one reason I shall talk about. Before Benediction thirty-four postulants made their public entry. Write it, if not in letters of gold, yet in letters that all may see and marvel. It was a beautiful sight; one that, in some measure compensates the angels for having to gaze on us always. Of course, the chapel was beautiful.

"Just a thought! To-day as I was saying my daily chaplet of the Immaculate Conception for you, I was thinking what I should ask our sweet white Mother for you, and the thought came that I would ask her to be in a special manner your tender Mother now, to comfort your heart for its sorrow. Till another day, God keep you.

"To-day must end this continued story. End it on paper, I mean. I shall just have time to wish you—what shall I wish you for *this* Christmas? *Peace* seems the only answer to my heart query. Yes, Sister, may I not pray that *calm,* quiet happiness of soul may descend to bless your day? I know, dear heart, that this first Christmas since your dear mother went to God, will be a cause for tears and heart yearnings, rather than for laughter and song and merriment. I shall be with you on the shadowed day. Yet let the little Christ Child

through His tears send you His Christmas gifts, even though they are veiled in sadness. He can always give you His love and His grace. And for these and all the rest, I pray. May He deal with you tenderly.

"God bless you. I love you in the Heart of the dear Lord, who loves us all.

"Yours in Jesus and Mary,

"SISTER MARY JOHN BERCHMANS."

The following pages taken from Sister Mary John Berchmans' note book were probably written towards the close of 1907.

"I feel that I should write this for two reasons. In the years to come it will help me to recall how sweet and gracious was the Lord; and when this time passes, as I suppose it must, that I may remember this year of grace. Surely the hours of aridity will arrive. We are told to expect them after a time of consolation, and to prepare. When they come, may I be found strong and ready. So, 'lest I forget,' I make mention of the dear Lord's great surpassing goodness to me. Do I not owe it to Him to say this after what I had previously written concerning my feeling in taking up life's cross again? *Then,* I had thought, and naturally, that the days would wear on, only lightened by the thought of His Will. And I had made my

sacrifice; when lo! there is no cross; there is no bitterness; there is no sacrifice. Each day of life seems a gift of God for which one cannot be sufficiently thankful. And this in absolute contradiction of my previous ideas of a lifetime. Surely the Lord is wondrously sweet! It seems as if He just wanted one to agree, to give up one's will, and then He turns all things so that there is no trial. As for the way in which He has led me during this year, I can only say that I would not, His will being considered of course, give up this year for all the others of my life. This has been my sweetest year! I hope it has been my richest. I hope that I have corresponded a *little,* though He has done almost all. All I have had to do, one might say, was to sit at His feet and learn. He has dealt with me, not at all according to my merits or rather demerits, but according to the riches of His love and bounty.

"May I remember always, always. If I return again to exterior work, I shall have a grave responsibility. Do not let me be unfaithful. Let me not shame Your teaching. Let me not be untrue to all that You have given me. Let me be true to Your love. I know that every religious is bound to come closer, closer, day by day, to her Spouse; but sometimes, the work, the stress of daily life, prevents, or distracts her from that union with the Beloved for which she left the world. It is too

bad that it is so; too bad because the union is so easy to maintain (I do not say attain) and it is so sweet. I know that every religious has attained to that union which constitutes her state, but the union should grow—deepen—as the days go on. I do not know about others; perhaps exterior occupations never hinder their growing intimacy of loving union with the Lord, but I do know that I never realized so fully just what it meant to be a religious. Therefore, I count this year as my richest. I hope and pray that I have come a little closer. I know that He has been all mercy and love. When He sends me forth to do His work, may my eyes and my heart never turn from Him. May I always be able to say, 'My turning is to Him.'

"I think that if we set ourselves resolutely to the thought—harbored it, lived in its light, faced it—that we are going to be, God helping, *saints, great saints,* we would not waste so much time in mediocrity. After all, why did we enter? Why did we leave the world? After five, ten, fourteen, twenty years, we *ought* to be nearer to the Lord, not only in knowledge, but in sanctity, in sacrifice, in love. And yet ?—? Five, twenty, years in a science, a practice, ought to show great results. It does not do to say, 'Oh! the holiness is there; we cannot see the soul; we must not judge of ourselves!' This may be true in limits, but we ought

to *show* the light, not because we want to manifest ourselves to the praise of men, but because a light can *not* be hidden. We *ought* to show Christ in our lives, lift Him up to draw all men to Him. We need not be afraid of a tendency to seek praise for goodness. Not with us moderns. The impulse is to decry, to blame, to count as foolish any even natural dropping of the veil in which we hide all that concerns God and our souls.

"In former times, perhaps a simple, natural holiness might have been esteemed. But now, I think the inclination runs the other way. We are ashamed to say a word about God, or our high calling as chosen brides of the King. I do not mean that I would fancy foolish or even not well-chosen words of the spiritual life. But we can discriminate! 'Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh.' Is it not so? Yet why, why, *why* are we here? We ought to resolve to be great saints, not to be afraid through humility to say that to ourselves and to mean it.

"To be called to be a religious means to be called to be the bride of Christ. What does that suppose? Face it. If we are not going to be that, again then why are we here? With the good material with which we started when at the beginning we hearkened to the Master's voice, are the results after ten, fifteen, twenty years in any correspondence? Religious life means a life of union

with God, growing more and more intimate daily. With twenty years of hours of increasing union where should we be? And are we? And if not, why not? O Lord, give us sense. We will have to face the question sooner or later. If we wait until eternity dawns and the King meets us with a frown because we have not received His advances during these earthly years, our regret will be too late.

"Each soul is called to her own height. She does not know it, she does not see just where it lies; but she is called. I feel that we do not honor our Lord by being so fearful, so diffident of saying to our own hearts that we must be, we will be, the saints He has willed us to be. Remember Saint Francis de Sales' remark when hearing of St. F. Xavier, St. F. Paula, etc., 'Well, gentlemen, there will be another St. Francis among that number if I die for it even.' Was that pride? Far from it. It was just resolution and courage to face all, to do all. I think he was grand in that speech. It showed such self-mastery. Therefore, I shall, I *will* be a saint, with God's help."

ANNUAL RETREAT, JULY, 1908

"I am making this retreat to obtain Union with God. Knowing my needs, I might have, perhaps I should have proposed other ends as the fruit, the result of these days of grace. Yet, as it came

to me during the first day to have for my end in this retreat Union with God, I follow the leading. I have found that when we have prayed especially for some time to the Holy Spirit, His guidance is always the best, and that our following of His light is ever the wisest. So I pass these days in reverent prayer and expectation, desiring humbly to grow a little in Union with God.

"The dominant thought of this retreat seems to be personal love for the dear Lord in the Sacrament of His love. I am so glad—thank God for all His tender mercies—'Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.' "

Later Sister adds:

"Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

"Oh! the sweet comfort in thought of the Will of God! When the realization comes strongly to us that we are to pass soon, oh! so soon, into the presence of Him we love, and there see Him face to face and *love* Him; and we feel in our thankfulness and our little helplessness that we would wish, before that Day of bliss, to do something for Him—something a tiny bit worthy of His tender love, that the joy so soon to break upon us, and for an eternity, has not been merited by those short poor years—then comes the peace in the thought of His will.

"If He does not wish great works from us, who are we to wish them? What is our grandest work

to one movement of His sweet Will? And so we rest, little children, glad and smiling, thankful to do His Will, thankful that He wills at all about us. 'Abba! Father!' "

About Easter we find Sister strong enough to write South again, and to pour out her heart to her friend! She had made her sacrifice, had acknowledged the Lord's doings in her illness and had assumed the burden of her illness according to a greater Will than her own. Peace had come to her in all its fullness, therefore, and life had taken on a new aspect. Of course, nothing of the struggle was ever manifested, except in these notes which were for her friend alone. She was just the same as ever to others. The smile and the joyous word were for each one who approached her. After her illness she gained strength so rapidly and had such wonderful powers of recuperation, that one was amazed to perceive the rich color creeping back to her cheeks and the light to shine in her gladsome eyes. One wondered how if she had been very ill, she could appear well so soon. To those who *knew* how far down into the depths she had descended at times, it was a continuous marvel.

Among her letters we find the following:

"The Lord is indeed good to give me this state of mind. He has, as you say, been marvelously

kind. You speak of the 'calm peace, the soulful joy that comes of days spent close to the Heart of the Master.' While it would seem, and so seemed to me in anticipation, that this time would be a period of weary days of waiting, and long hours of endless desire for activity, it has not proved so at all. I do not know quite how to express this, and I feel a little hesitant about writing this, yet I know it will gladden your heart to hear that the dear Lord has become wondrously gracious. When I had made my acceptance of His Will, He surprised me by taking all the bitterness out of it. You knew my sentiments of a shrinking dread of a future in which one was merely to live. This is one reason now why I tell you that the past months have been, in one sense, the sweetest of my life. I would not forego them, or more correctly, knowing what I do, I would not have willed them out of my experience for any other thing. If you were here I could say what I find it hard to write. Suffice it to say that I have learnt *more* of the dear Lord (and love is a consequence of that knowledge, is it not?) and have grown nearer to Him, I *hope*, than I could have done in years. So it seems to me. Perhaps with other souls who are very near to God, there would not be the need of this time of rest and union. They keep approaching Him in every day's duties. . . .

"Spiritually I live about the same. That is, my *manner* of living varies little, but I hope I am *growing*. It would be a shaming of the dear Lord if such were not the case. Some things are difficult to say, far more to write. The only thing I would say here is, if we only knew, only realized all through the years from the beginnings in religious life, how wondrously beautiful, how rich in varied interest, in manifestation of growth, is the true spiritual life, it would be such a saving of wasted efforts in the wrong directions. I do not speak of the other merit or worth of that life of union. I just mention that one aspect, because many have a secret fear of the monotony, the dullness—use any word. I know, I had it myself. I don't know if I make myself clear. But, oh dear! there could be no richer, fuller life than is given by the dear sweet friendship of the Lord, the keeping always of the face turned to Him and growing ever and deepening in a knowledge that makes one marvel at former dullness and ignorance; in a love that makes life one deep, tender joy, no matter what betides."

Sister Mary John Berchmans found time to speak of God, of His Holy Mother, and especially of the devotion to the Holy Spirit. This seemed to be the devotion she desired for her loved Sisters. To one she said, "You should be devoted to the Holy Spirit. *You* are just the sort

of person who should love the thought of what the Holy Spirit means. You would grow in grace. Begin everything by saying, 'Come Holy Ghost!' 'Come Holy Ghost!' Just that. It is enough." "I love the Holy Ghost, and His action in Mary. It was all so wonderful! I never tire of thinking of it, and what it meant for her."

Again in speaking of the Blessed Mother of God, Sister, at one time, said: "I have begun the practice of making a perpetual novena to the Mother of God." She had begun a novena to Mary without thinking of the dates, and found that the nine days finished on a feast of the Queen. After a pause of a day, she began another, and the result was the same. Again without any method in her mind, she had said prayers for some particular intention, had started a novena, and discovered again a feast of Our Lady. So, all through the year, she kept up her practice, and invited others to try it. More than ten years after her death, one of the Sisters was heard to say that she had never abandoned that practice, given her by Sister Mary John Berchmans.

When God desires to lift souls to Himself, He withdraws them, sometimes, from all that might interfere with the union he proposes. "I will lead her into the wilderness and I will speak to her heart," is the decision of the Divine Lover. All

things that tend to bind the spirit to earth must be removed so that the heights may be attained more surely and quickly. Sister Mary John Berchmans was to feel the arms of Divine Love about her in an impending separation, and know the tender mercy of the Lord leading her apart from those whom she loved, that the Spouse might claim her more entirely. In the Autumn of 1908, Sister was left more perfectly in possession of the "upper room," since her sister, who had come to love its peace and seclusion also, and to partake with the happy occupant in its feast of spiritual joy, was to be sent South to teach in another Convent of the order. Before the year was over, in fact, on the 21st of November, Sister Mary John Berchmans was at the point of death—and anointed. Yet how strange are the ways of God! This separation, which entailed so much suffering on both sides, was the cause of a closer drawing of the soul of Sister Mary John Berchmans to God, her Divine Spouse. She went to Him in her sorrow, she communed for long hours with Him, and He drew her to Him in the closest bonds of love.

The following extracts from her letters show her entire resignation to the Will of God, and her tender love for her Sister and her friends:

"You must have more confidence in the dear Lord. I shall go on as before, quietly and calmly.

The Lord has not half finished His work with me, and until that is accomplished, there is no need to worry. When He makes me fit to take my stand with you great workers in His vineyard, then begin to expect great doings. You will see me then, rejoicing to run my course. I may overstep bounds, and you may have full need and reason for limitations and worries. I mean that not realizing the extent of my strength or weakness I may overdo matters. But *now*, I shall go on as calm and peaceful as one of your beautiful, golden summer evenings. So trust me to the Lord and 'dinna fret.'

"Do you know I do not think I shall get any merit for bearing crosses. I never or seldom consciously realize them until they are taken away. Then by the wondrous uplifting, I know how grave had been the pressure. Others feel their crosses in all their burdensomeness. Now, this is material for your solving. Your happiness is mine; perhaps more fully mine, as we feel more deeply ourselves the joy or grief of those we love.

"No, I am not forgetting that I am writing you a feast-day letter. And what is more, I am saying in my heart (do you not hear them?) all manner of beautiful wishes. I do hope that this day will be a most happy one. Let it be so, dear. Let the Lord pour into your heart all the joy that He wants to give you for His own love's sake, and in

response to the love and the prayers and wishes of those who hold you dear. Let the full twenty-four hours be golden ones overflowing with the wine of love and happiness. Let the peace of God 'that surpasseth understanding' come and rest in your heart. If love measures the power of our prayers, then because of my love and my prayers you will have such joy that the day will be one song of gladness. Its memory and its refrain will never leave your heart. I am saying *let* the joy abound because unless you open wide the gates for trouble and sorrow and pain to depart, and for sweet happiness to enter in and abide, love and good wishes will come with their rich gifts, and will find you sitting unheeding within the walls. So, Sister mine, be very happy this year. A little privation makes us appreciate our mercies. Let the one sorrow of this year, though it unfolds some few others, be *your* gift to the Lord on this fair day for all His gifts to you. There is a tiny comfort in feeling that we can offer Him some thing, even though it is tear-stained. I think He counts it more precious so. I am confident, as you see, that your feast will be very happy. And do you think that I shall be absent? Not I. You will not have far to seek me. I shall come in the early morning and wake you perhaps with a feast-day kiss. I shall try to be on time. I shall not leave you through the long bright

day and it may fall out that you will walk home with me beneath the stars.

"These days preceding your feast are more filled—I mean just that—with thoughts of you and prayers for you. The glow is cast forward. May it never leave the coming days, the days that will be made richer because of the gifts of the feast. If I specify that you are in novenas of Masses and Communions it would lead to the inference that at other times you are absent. Yet I can modify by saying that the graces asked are festal ones, that in my visits with the Lord and in the sweet, long talks we both look forward to on coming feasts, He thinks of gifts for you before my love can devise them.

"Now, dear, I must say goodbye. I kiss you now, and for your feast day. I pray God to bless you, to make every day a feast of graces. I hold you in my thoughts and in my prayers and my love enfolds your life. Goodbye. To God I commend you.

"I have been asking special graces for you, dear, from the Holy Ghost. You know that April is His month and Monday, His day. So do not forget to be particularly devoted to Him. You will receive untold favors. It is perfectly marvelous the way in which He answers the slightest desire. Try His sweet goodness. Make one novena and then

another, and continue, and see what the Lord will do.

"You see I have received so many gifts and graces that I almost feel like writing a book to publish the tender gracious mercy of the Holy Spirit. Just try, and then confirm my statement.

"Be good now and never feel that I am far away from you. The closer you and I draw to God the nearer we are each to each. As I said I love you more and more with each passing day. If I continue I do not know how my heart will hold all its treasure of love—only it grows, too.

"Oh, dear heart! if I were to write here—if I could—all the desires and prayers and wishes and love bursts, my letter would be pages upon pages. I shall just tell you that I pray for you all joy and peace. Health and strength are among my wishes for you, dear. One of my constant desires is that you will grow more and more deeply and closely into union and become a great Saint. So I may as well confess it here in your feast-day letter. The other wishes are merged in this, because all joys and graces will come to you if you receive the great gift. See how I have been talking about you behind your back and taking liberties. But I knew that you would not mind. Deep in your soul you want that most of all.

"Oh I do want Our Lord to give you such gifts and graces that joy and peace will flood your

heart. I feel that your soul will be very happy with a deep, deep happiness that only you and God will know. I want you to be so close to Him that the brightness of His risen glory will enfold and beautify your heart and soul. I want Him to give you a special gift of peace; I mean *His Peace,* that is so wondrous a treasure. He will give you all good things as He deems fit. And you will be so happy, and I will be happy, if for no other cause but your joy. God bless you on this day and every day."

"And now let me thank you for the First Friday Mass. On that day I did not know that I was being so enriched. How could I? I only knew that I received a great favor, and all day long I seemed to realize the union of you and Sister and of the Exposition at Shorb. It seemed as if we were together. I thought it was because the Blessed Sacrament was being exposed here and at your place, that made you seem so near. There certainly was a union of prayer. The dear Sisters and girls must have been most fervent in their prayer, so marked was the result. I never can express my gratitude when I know that Mass has been offered for me. It is to me the greatest gift a mortal can give. So accept my soul's gratitude and speak of it to those who hold me in their debt.

"God bless and keep you ever. As you say, without your asking, I hold you before the Lord.

May our sweet Mother fill your heart with love for Him and for her."

"God has you in His keeping. That I know. And I wait for the unfolding of His plan. In the meantime, I pray for you, dear. You could tell us of great graces that are coming to you. Suffering is the means He uses to do many things. May He do His sweet tender Will with you. Is it not comforting that we can trust our loved ones to Him as to no one else? So I trust you to His keeping, and I know you are safe. I was glad you did not write. I want you to rest.

"Our retreat ended yesterday. Did I make it? Well, I made *my* retreat, but I could not follow the exercises. Shall I tell you that story? Well—I was feeling so fine that I thought, of course, I could do as the others, this year. So I started down to chapel Sunday night, Benediction and opening meditation. The next day I went to the meditation 9:30, to the auditorium, and decided to remain for the 11 o'clock instruction instead of going back and forth. I was beginning to feel fatigue. In the afternoon I went again to the 2:30 instruction and stayed in the hall waiting for the 4 o'clock Meditation. Then in the evening I went to the chapel for the Benediction and Meditation. But I had reached the end. All the bad things that have not been happening for ever so long came back. Well, I got up stairs. I concluded that I

should go down and tell Mother in the morning that I was not able to follow—that perhaps I might go to the evening Meditation. In the morning as I felt a little rested, I decided that I should make one more attempt before speaking. So I went over to the auditorium for the Meditation. I managed to drag back and I got up stairs and on the bed. You see the Lord's will was manifest. So I stayed up stairs, just going down for Mass and Communion to the chapel. So I made my retreat privately.

"Of course, all that was a *passing* fatigue just used by the Lord for His purpose. The retreat was lovely. All the Sisters voice the same sentiment."

The following is her reply to an invitation from the Alumnae Association. It is probably her last communication to her beloved "girls" who were eagerly looking forward to this reunion:

Secretary of the Alumnae Association,
Convent of the Holy Names, San Francisco.

Dear Mary:

In response to your invitation to the Alumnae Reunion, I must needs send my sincere regret. You will kindly present them to the members of the Association, and assure them that were I merely to consult my own pleasure, my answer

would be quite otherwise. I feel confident that you will understand how conditions render it impossible for me to give myself the pleasure of meeting you all at this gathering. You know me too well to need my assurance that it is from no lack of sympathy or interest or hearty cooperation.

Though I may not be present at the reunion to meet you all in the kindly interchange of smiles and greetings and ideas, yet I shall be one with you in the union of thought, of good wishes, and prayers. Accept these, not only for the social success of this particular gathering to-day, but for the higher, more spiritual ends and aims of the association itself—the advancement of our fine Catholic Womanhood.

It is good now and then to look back and to look forward, and later in the quiet inner rooms of the heart, to compare. This reunion furnishes the pleasant opportunity of recalling old scenes and old memories of the dear by-gone days. May God's blessing be upon it and upon you all in the daily striving to live up to the high and beautiful ideals of school-time—and girlhood.

With this prayer not only on my lips, but deep in my heart, I am always

Yours sincerely, in Jesus and Mary,
SISTER MARY JOHN BERCHMANS.

Convent Holy Names, Oakland,
Jan. 12, 1911."

"And now what shall I wish you for your day of gladness? Shall it be the same beautiful desire, old yet ever new, for your joy, your peace? Yes, it must be so, but the wishes change each year because *we* grow, and our desires grow larger and deeper and more truly wise with each succeeding year. So my friend, I wish you all happiness, the kind that is deep down in the heart, and yet so rich and full that it rises in its flood tide and fills the entire being. My wish would have your day beautiful and blithesome. I know that the wishes of loving hearts are prayers full of power over the tender heart of God. When those wishes are for graces and blessings they have increased value. So in full confidence I pray for great spiritual riches for you, and I know you will receive all and even more than my poor prayers can compass. So your day will indeed be happy. I shall be with you in love and thought. I shall make it a wee bit brighter, shall I not? I know my place among the hearts that love you. Do you know it too? Well, there I shall be the entire day, adding more and more brightness by the union of thought and prayers.

"I have been heroically keeping my word about not appearing to notice this beautiful day. Now that Sister M. is going over to see you, I can

surely take the opportunity afforded to try to express some of the thoughts of my heart.

"I must needs be saying with my dear St. Peter, 'Silver and gold, I have none; but what I have I give unto thee.' These gifts that I offer are of the heart. They are thoughts of love, wishes for your happiness, prayers for the peace of your soul, for its increase in riches.

"I have been praying these past days for oh! so many graces for you, dear; for the gift of greater joy—not only to-day—but for all the coming days; for the deepening of calm, sweet peace in your life; for the gracious favor of a closer union to the Heart of God. This last encloses all the other pleadings that my heart has been making for you; all that I might enumerate here, but that I leave to His notice and His care.

"A beautiful gift has been yours—the rich fair years in which the Bridegroom has shown you love untold. Who shall say of all the sweet secrets, the tender communings of His Heart and yours! You should be very happy to-day, my Sister, not counting all our prayers for your joy, but just for the looking back over your life. A comfort and a gratitude should surely spring up in your soul at the sight of what those years enfold—at the thought of what they mean.

"So, God bless you with joy—even bliss to-day. May He give you many days in which to work for

His glory when you will be 'clothing your soul in its vesture of gold.' I am with you in spirit, and I greet you in the great love of my heart."

The extracts end here. The letters go on to the month of February, 1912, when her illness resisted all further effort. One is astonished at the great task which she imposed on herself. Love alone could have allowed the spirit to rise above the great bodily exertion necessary to produce epistles. Those who have read them have spoken of their real literary worth and beauty. One to whom they were confided wrote of them: "I would be endless in my praise if I were to trace the charms of these letters, and yet I could not do them justice. How I relished their reading, and how I felt all perfumed by their fragrance and charmed by their sweetness! Only a saint and one with a beautiful mind, could have so written."

CHAPTER V

"Hic accipiet benedictionem a Domino; et misericordiam a Deo salutari suo; Haec est generatio quaerentium eum quaerentium faciem Dei Jacob."

N Sister Mary John Berchmans' retreat notes of the year 1908 she had written, "This year it must be union with God." From early childhood she had given herself to Him and each day had cemented this union, until at the end it was manifested in many ways, especially in her frequent recourse to prayer.

After so many trying illnesses, as year after year the old symptoms returned with their need of watchfulness and excessive care and their attendant trials, she found herself alone with God. Her days, when she was not strictly confined to her bed of suffering, were spent in the "little sacristy," the "upper room," from which she could at times look out upon the tabernacle and hold communion with the Divine Guest. There she spent many hours, seated in her big chair placed close to the round window. At the consecration of the Mass and during the raising of the Sacred Host at Benediction she would rise and kneel on the step placed before

that window, although at other times her strength would not permit her to leave her place. Even though necessarily she was deprived of the sight of the Altar at times, her soul looked beyond the barrier and communed with the Divine Spouse of her heart, Who day by day drew her more closely and made her more and more like Himself.

Yet the intercourse with her Divine Spouse did not prevent Sister Mary John Berchmans from welcoming those who found time in the midst of arduous labors to come to her. Sister received all so graciously that they came often to tell her of their joys, of the little happenings of the day, or again to obtain advice and encouragement in their spiritual advancement. The Mother Provincial, at that time in poor health, declared that she depended on Sister for aid in her own case, and towards the government of the great work entrusted to her. The Mistress of Novices went also to consult Sister about many things which tended towards the furtherance in virtue of the little flock confided to her care. Other Sisters often made their way to the "anchor-hold," where the Lord opened up the treasures of wisdom to his devoted recluse and they always brought away comfort and peace. There seemed to be consolation for all, as grace seemed to go out from her, even though her own suffering might be great.

In fact, the Sisters availed themselves of the privilege of conversing with Sister and came so often that fear was expressed lest their visits cause fatigue to the ardent soul of this lover of God. As soon as they left, the vigil began again. Some days, owing to circumstances, her watchings were uninterrupted. At other times those who came looked in at her but did not enter. There she sat, her hands joined together, her eyes closed, her face radiant, her whole being seemingly engrossed in silent intercourse with the Unseen; so they stole away again, fearing to break the spell, conscious of something very sacred; feeling, as some one said, that Sister already had a Visitor and was holding intercourse with Him.

Many instances might be recorded of the help and unction attendant on Sister Mary John Berchmans' words and her love for the Sisters and for those who came within the narrow circle of her influence. The sweetest recollections might be cited here of the experience of those who remembered their visits to her with some word or look for them that seemed to have a special meaning. They came, like bees, for her sweetness, and never failed to go away enriched.

Sister Mary John Berchmans gave no outward sign of the near approach of the Bridegroom, nor of the sweetness He was communicating to her. She confided to a Sister, that fearful lest she show

what was taking place in her soul, she had begged our Divine Lord not to permit her to do anything extraordinary, and He had reassured her, telling her that no manifestations would be shown on her part. Except for the loveliness and serenity of her countenance there was no visible sign to mark the nearness of the presence of the Beloved. Each day, however, she was being drawn into closer contact with the Divine, and newer truths were whispered into her heart and newer mysteries into her life. She was being moulded into the Image of the Spouse, and attaining by degrees, under His guiding Hand, unto the perfection He demanded of His spouse.

The only one who knew her soul fully during those years was her confessor, the saintly old Jesuit, Father Sardi, who always brought consolation to her in her many trials. She always spoke of him with grateful affection and profound respect. To him she confided all and he helped her in many ways.

Another, a priest who had attended Sister during her years of illness, showed his appreciation of her evident sanctity by the following testimony when Sister's writings were put into his hands:

"I could not return the notes made by your saintly Sister during her years of contemplation without a word of thanks . . . I deemed it always a privilege and a blessing to visit her.

Thank God, I knew her, heard her speak of God's work—for her conversation was in Heaven—blessed her, ministered to her; and, I know I had her prayers.

"That she was a chosen soul—spiritual to a very high degree—I always felt; but those notes which you so kindly permitted me to read not only confirmed my opinion of those days, but convinced me that we had had one in our midst whose sanctity may yet merit formal recognition from our holy Church.

"In editing these pages, and in making known the story of a life so simple and so wonderful, you will be conferring such an aid to the many striving for perfection as to deserve their gratitude and their prayers."

After one of Sister's severe spells of sickness, when a Sister was attempting to express her gratitude for much kindness, this good friend protested, saying that he should not be thanked for what he considered of great worth to himself. "I am the gainer," he said, "in the little I can do for Sister John Berchmans. Her prayers have done much for me."

The testimony of many Sisters might be given as to Sister M. John Berchmans' influence for good, and her desire to serve others, but the following may suffice. One of the Sisters, who had known Sister M. John Berchmans ever since the

latter's early days of teaching at Tenth Street, heard that something was being written about Sister's life and work. With deep emotion she said: "Oh! I have often wanted to speak of what I knew of Sister M. John Berchmans, but I have always found it so hard because of my great love for her." Then with the tears flooding her face, she said in a barely audible voice, "Oh! if you only knew what Sister had meant to me! She was my ideal. She was everything to me, when I needed help. I venerated her memory, and I think of her daily—and I always pray to her." Here, overcome by her excess of emotion, which prevented her speaking longer, she hastily said, "I shall try to write something. It is so difficult to say all that I want—and that is due to her."

A day or two later, this Sister spoke more calmly of what Sister had done for her in many ways, especially assisting her in her work in the class room, coming to her aid after school hours, when so many other duties awaited, and so many persons demanded her patience or attention. "She unravelled the snarls that had plagued me during the day, and smoothed out many an uneven path. She was an angel to me, especially in a spiritual sense. I felt like giving out the best in me when I left her. Sister read me like a book," she added. "There were phases in my character which made religious life, and the acquisition of virtue a thorny

process at times. Sister M. John Berchmans knew these trials which I encountered, and though she did not touch upon my defects, she would dwell upon the opposite good qualities, which, she declared, were just as strong; and, in this way, lifted me above the lower strata of my nature. I was extremely reticent, yet my soul seemed to expand under the influence of her loving words. She was *all love*. One felt that she *really loved* one, and that she would be able, through that love somehow to aid and uplift one. After I had talked with her, I felt that I could do whatever she thought I could. I can never say enough in her praise." Not satisfied, even when she was told that her testimony would be written and given in these pages—after bewailing her inability to do justice to the subject so dear to her heart—she wrote the following fine tribute:

"My dear Sister ———. I wish I could express in words my feelings with regard to our dear Sister M. John Berchmans. The attempt I am going to make I know will not satisfy me, but you may understand—you may read between the lines. I venerated her. She was my ideal as a religious and as a teacher. She understood me perfectly. I felt like giving out my best to everyone, after a little talk with her. Her smile gave me courage— which I often lacked. Her words of advice

stimulated me to go forward. They made a lasting impression on me. Though she has left us several years, yet I feel her near me, and it thrills me to think of her. Her memory is sweet to me, and I am happy that I came in close contact with her.

"She was very sympathetic! This I realized when my dear mother died in 1910. No words ever soothed me as did hers. Five years ago I received two great graces, which I attribute to her and to no one else.

"How often I have found myself regretting that such a beautiful character—one so capable of producing lasting good—did not work longer in the vineyard of the Lord, but we cannot search the inscrutable designs of God. In the early part of our dear Sister's illness, I thought that she would recover soon and assured her of my feeling—prompted, no doubt, by the hope I had, and my affection for Sister—but she answered, 'I do not think so, Sister. Pray that I may make a perfect offering of myself.'

"May her spirit live amongst us, and may the memory of her ready obedience and holy life spur us—her Sisters—on to greater things for God and the Community of which she was so worthy a member."

Some years before, Sister Mary John Berchmans had confided to her Sister that Father Sardi wished her to put into writing some of the favors

vouchsafed to her. To another Sister she said the same, and that he had, moreover, made it an act of obedience that she make the required exertion. One wonders how the recording of those things that took place in her soul could have been accomplished, since at times of illness the slightest movement meant pain. Sometimes the writing is labored and irregular. At other times it flows on smoothly enough because of Sister's renewed vigor; but not the least of God's favors were shown in His giving her the strength to record His mercies in her notes. Those who have read them have declared that they attest the sanctity of the writer, beyond any doubt, and that they deserve the gratitude of those striving for perfection.

A pleasant feature of her periods of convalescence was the nearness of her own sister, who came at stated times to break into the daily routine of the sick room. This Sister, at that time Superior of the Convent of St. Joseph's, came to see her sister and to bring comfort and diversion with her. Sometimes it was a book or a little pamphlet, a particularly beautiful "holy picture," or a bunch of flowers from the old garden of Tenth Street. All this tended to brighten the glow of earth, and make these days very lovely to both. Later, they proved rife with memories for one who would look back to them with gratitude and consolation.

Twice Sister Mary John Berchmans went for short intervals to Tenth Street, to the Convent which had been erected on the old site after the earthquake and fire. Through the efforts of the Pastor, another Convent had been raised to replace the new one, but just completed for the memorable fire of 1906. The old Convent, so endeared to the pupils by many precious memories, was destroyed, so that the House which the Sisters inhabited at this time was the third erected on the site. Only a part of the former garden remained, and it was with mingled feelings of joy and regret that Sister Mary John Berchmans revisited the well-loved place.

When the old pupils learned that Sister was well enough "to cross the Bay" and "come over" to Tenth Street, great was their satisfaction and delight! They flocked to her, to greet her, to say a few words to her, and to receive from her new and more enticing words of wisdom. Her smile was the same and no one would think that disease had ever touched her, so buoyant and full of joy was she. Her face seemed fairly lit up by the happiness she experienced in meeting her "old girls," and care seemed far from her, especially as she witnessed the heart-felt contentment of each in her presence and the satisfaction and pleasure in her seemingly quick return to complete health.

God was watching closely over the sweet soul of His chosen one and giving her gladness and suffering in due measure. All through this intercourse with others, as well as in the suffering that followed with tireless regularity, the union of the soul with her Spouse went on. As the loving one in the Canticles declares, "My turning is to Him, and His turning is to me." Such was the song of her heart. The God Who had preserved her childhood from all blame, and Who had enticed her into the enclosure of His Heart, was perfecting her life, and leading her near the waters of refreshment. She, on her part, was responding with love to light the way, through the dim avenues of suffering, on to the embrace of the Beloved and the whisperings of His love, to make known to others some of these divine secrets.

Sister Mary John Berchmans told one of her friends part of all that passed between her and her Divine Spouse, and what her illness and her sufferings had meant to her, and what the love and wisdom of the Trinity were accomplishing in her soul.

So her days followed on, the spiritual always predominating in them. Her love for souls and her desire to help others to lift their lives to Him, her zeal for hearts to love Him, her God, followed by pain and weakness and long periods of almost complete isolation. Owing to the idea

that Sister's condition was rendered worse by her seeing the Sisters, a ban had been placed upon her intercourse with them, and a new trial given to the ardent soul of the invalid. To a nature like hers, loving the society of others, easily charmed and delighted by every thing good in life, even the seemingly small, this exclusion of those to whom she might render aid and comfort went to form a robe of suffering that enveloped her soul and made her more agreeable and comely to the Bridegroom. He took advantage of her very love of people to turn that love into a desire for gaining souls—that they might be brought to Him as the fruits even of her earthly love. "The salvation of souls" henceforth became her cry.

One after the other had the cherished ones been removed, or she had been removed from them. One after the other the very closest to her heart were sent from her, so that the days of isolation might begin, and the Spouse might speak without disturbance or noise of words. "I will lead her into the wilderness and I will speak to her heart." In the clefts of the rock the dove hides that her mate may find her. In her retirement and seclusion Sister's vigils began, and her lamp was kept burning. Her heart became as a light unto His feet to lure Him into her presence. She watched for the first whisper of His coming—watched while the wings of the seraphs of Heaven

calmed the silences, that the breathings of the Holy Spirit might stir the depths of her heart and mind and descend to light the hidden recesses of her waiting soul.

The ever Blessed Trinity was disclosing its magnificent volumes of learning to her. The faith, the hope, and the love of the chosen Virgin of Virgins were being brought home to her. The purity of the Soul of Christ, the matchless Will of Christ, the tremendous sacrifice of the God-man was the book of her days.

The marvelous condescension of God to man in the union effected began to grow into a reality of praise and fecundity of love, by which souls were to be brought to the knowledge of their Maker, and become her inheritance. It was all wonderful; all the work, the power of the Most High.

"Quis ascendet in montem Domini?" Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord?" The answer is the plan of her whole life: "Only the clean of hand and the pure of heart."

On the day of her *prise d' habit,* the taking of the white veil, the choir had sung this most appropriate of hymns and reiterated the phrase, *"Quis ascendet in montem Domini?"* and later on she had reverted to the significance of the words, and exulted in the idea of the purity of life and the grandeur of the heights they implied.

This ascent had been going on through all her religious life. Step by step, and hour by hour, she had been turning her gaze upwards, until before long she had left the dusty byways to begin the steep road that led to the mountains of light above.

Even in the early years of her novitiate she was known not only for her love for the rule and for perfection; but especially for an ardent piety which appeared part of her life. Once after the retiring bell had rung, and her own sister, wishing to communicate with her in some necessity or other, had attempted to enter the little curtained cell in the dormitory, she found Sister Mary John Berchmans with the crucifix pressed to her lips. Sister withdrew, thinking the scene too sacred for intrusion, and waited a few moments before drawing the curtains again. To her surprise, however, she saw that the scene had not changed. Sister Mary John Berchmans was still holding her crucifix, gazing at it lovingly, and praying softly. Her Sister turned aside again and it was some time before she found that she might enter. When she did, Sister was all anxiety to help, to give whatever information was required. She had had no idea of her sister's waiting and she was never disturbed by being informed of it. The little scene suggested an ordinary, common occurrence; a nightly *tête-à-tête* between the spouse and her Beloved.

CHAPTER VI.

"Et misericordiam a Deo salutari suo."

ISTER MARY JOHN BERCHMANS had always had a very tender devotion to Mary in her Immaculate Conception, which devotion seemed to increase as time went on. She prepared for that beautiful feast, not only by a novena of nine days' prayer, but also by many hours of recollection and meditation. Under the inspiration of Our Divine Lord, she was accustomed to hold up, as it were, in prayer, this Immaculate Conception, with all that this sight would mean of the purity and whiteness of the glorious Queen of Heaven, before the august sight of the most holy God. Mary would serve as a rampart—a barrier—to avert the wrath of man's Creator, and to hide the impurity and vileness of earth that He might not again repent Him that He had made man.

Sister Mary John Berchmans had a particular devotion for the Holy Souls. She had their fate and need very much to heart. "My Souls," as she called them, must be held up to the eyes of a tender Father Who loved these children of His care even while His justice punished their transgressions. She confided to one of the Sisters that

they came to her at night, pleading for help in various ways; and that they manifested their distress and begged for aid.

Once, speaking of the benefit of little things, Sister urged another Sister to offer all her actions, even the ordinary ones of eating and sleeping, in union with Our Lord's actions when on earth. She declared that every smallest action could be made meritorious by so doing. She said that she had made a practice of this kind for years and that Our Lord gave her the assurance of His great complaisance in this offering. In connection with this idea, she spoke of other offerings of prayer and the sacrifice of one's self. But it was for priests that she found herself interceding. "This seems to be my big work—to offer all for priests." When at other times she tried to pray for other persons, she found that she could not do so. She was compelled to turn aside from these petitions and to beg and intercede for priests—for their needs, for the furtherance of their work, and that they might serve God more fully, and that His greater glory be attained.

"Little Christmas," or Kings' Day, as it is sometimes called, was a special time for her zeal. She spoke of it as "Manifestation Day," when God had manifested Himself first to the Gentiles through the Three Kings. They had offered their gifts to the Infant King; and He had shown Him-

self to them, and taught them many things in those moments when they knelt at His Feet. Christ would also manifest Himself to us if we would but offer Him our gifts of prayer, sacrifice, and love.

Sister was very insistent on this. "If we would but offer ourselves—deny ourselves—even present our smallest gifts of faith, hope, and charity, the Little King would show Himself in might and strength and love. He would enable us to live for Him, or die for Him."

DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH

Loving Our Lady as she did, Sister Mary John Berchmans could not fail to have a sincere devotion to St. Joseph. We are not surprised, therefore, to find the following in her note book:

"In meditating on the Incarnation, one gets a truer view of St. Joseph. I do not hold that he was asleep or unconscious at the time of the great honor. If later on Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost because of the ineffable mystery, what must have been the effect on St. Joseph's soul at the special visitation and operation of the Three Divine Persons of the Adorable Trinity! The moment looked-for with sighs and groanings for thousands of years is at hand, and Heaven

stoops to earth as never before. Surely St. Joseph's soul is receiving wondrous grace. I do not say that he knew what was befalling Mary, but I do think that he was keeping vigil in his little room, and that he felt that God was visiting the home at Nazareth. He had not been unfaithful to grace—he was ever on the watch for the coming of the Lord. . . . But he 'kept all these things in his heart' also . . . Think of the effect on Joseph's soul of the hourly presence of Jesus and Mary after the Incarnation!"

So the days of this hidden lover of Christ went on, more and more under the guidance of the holy Spirit of God. She had begun to live the life of Mary's dolors by her own sufferings and she was being prepared for the end. Her love for Mary had always been the uppermost passion of her early years, and she had doubtless been repaid by many favors from Mary's hands. She had asked that she be made like unto Mary in soul and in body, and we see from her writings that that grace, wonderful as it is, was given to her in great measure. When one recalls the pure beauty of her countenance, chastened under her heavy spells of illness, but for the most part brightened with a lovely and delicate coloring, and glowing with a constant and winning smile, it is not difficult to believe that the favor was granted her.

At Communion time especially this radiance was remarkable. The Sisters who accompanied the Blessed Sacrament when the priest brought Holy Communion to Sister in the sacristy or in the infirmary, were struck by it and spoke of the spiritual glow that seemed to emanate from her countenance, as she clasped her hands over her treasure and was immediately lost to her surroundings. One of the attending priests, who often brought her the Blessed Sacrament and who considered it a personal gain to know her, spoke of this seraphic look, and of her evident purity of soul.

Sister Mary John Berchmans wished to write the life of the Blessed Mother, and spoke of her desire to her confessor, and to two of the Sisters. That she had received much knowledge from Our Lady herself, we cannot doubt, since she communicated some of these helps to the Sisters, and we have every reason to believe that Mary was ever close to her devoted child; but the time was short and the desire alone was to be her tribute to that love. Only in Heaven would Mary complete the knowledge she had so graciously given to her even on earth. Yet, Sister Mary John Berchmans sometimes spoke of her knowledge of Mary's actions, when on earth, and Our Lady's reasons for doing certain things. In speaking of the Marriage Feast at Cana to one of the Sisters, she said

that Mary had manifested a perfect acquiescence in the Will of God. "They have no wine," the Mother of Jesus had said, but she did not press her desire further. She really made no requests, in order to teach us the perfection of following the Will of God. Her thought was cast into that Will and remained perfectly calm and quiescent. If it were her Son's desire, it would be arranged in due time; if not, she would not be disturbed. It would be just as He willed, not as she wished.

She herself was ever endeavoring to practice this indifference. To desire nothing, to seek nothing; to rest in the Supreme Will of the Creator. If it pleased the Divine Giver to grant her requests, well and good; if not, then He willed otherwise and she would fit her will to His.

Once, however, she seemed to have a strong desire that some of her cherished friends, those for whom she prayed most, or as she expressed it, "held before the Lord"—that these might be given some favor from the Beloved Who was so lavish in His gifts to her. Days passed and she heard of no favors; but she considered that it was His trying her and she would wait even as Mary, calm and confident that whatever He willed would be best.

Yet, even as she shaped her will to His Divine pleasure, the favor was granted, and one of her friends came to her to tell of the great mercy of

the Lord, to say that Christ Himself had appeared to her, and had shown, to her unspeakable joy, His divine and holy countenance.

It was in 1907. This friend of Sister had been in the habit of visiting Sister Mary John Berchmans. On one particular afternoon, Sister M. had spoken of the events that had happened during the day and was apparently greatly interested in persons and things. Sister Mary John Berchmans listened with her old winsome smile and at last said, very quietly, "Sister, I am afraid that you are too much taken up with some people. One must be careful not to love them too much; nor to give oneself up entirely to them, nor to passing events. Oh! if you would only give yourself up to the love of God and leave all else, you would be like a flame." After a few more words in a serious strain in which they both spoke freely of the wondrous love of Christ, Sister M. proceeded to her cell. Her heart seemed held by some holy power, and the divine love of Christ seemed to have begun to burn already therein.

Sister Mary John Berchmans' look and words had made a deep impression on her mind. At last she reached her cell, but had barely entered when she fell on her knees. The Lord was there in her cell before her. His Face, tender and sweet, with His glowing, deep, beautiful eyes upon her, was there on the wall of her cell in front of

her, as if painted and yet living. For some time she gazed, speechless and breathless, with face uplifted, hardly comprehending, afraid to lose a moment of that precious Face, until It vanished all on a sudden, and she found herself on her knees and sighing heavily. He had been there! The Light of the World had glowed before her enraptured gaze and lighted the flame of His love in her soul. It was the happiest moment of her life! The memory of the immense grace would never leave her, she knew, and she said to herself that eternity itself would prove too short for her to show her gratitude to the Divine Guest Who had sought her in her own little cell to prove His love for her. Mary had said "They have no wine"; and He, perceiving the great need, had acceded to His holy one's request and the water was made wine. Sister had drawn the attention of her Spouse to the great need of her friend, and to prove His love for His own He had allowed this pouring out of His Heart's love into the earthen vessel, that the joy of both might be filled.

This nun to whom the favor had been accorded, realizing her great unworthiness, declared that she did not think that she should speak of it even to Sister Mary John Berchmans, not knowing that Sister's prayers and holiness of life had brought it about, yet connecting it with the conversation of the afternoon of the few days

past. At last she made up her mind to speak of it to Sister and broached the subject by asking her if she had ever seen Our Lord. Sister Mary John Berchmans looked at her calmly, and then said very slowly, "Not in His visible form, but as One Who is very near." When He spoke, she heard, or her spirit heard, she said, very clearly and distinctly; and when He was with her, she felt His Presence and knew that It was He. Then the Sister with great diffidence told her what had happened, and waited for Sister's comment. To her deep surprise, Sister seemed not to answer her but to be absorbed in prayer, so quiet was she. She seemed actually to withdraw from her, as if she were conversing with some one else, as no doubt she was. Was she not thanking Him, even as Mary, for the good things He had bestowed on others?

Some few years after, when Sister M. was speaking of Sister Mary John Berchmans to another Sister who had been much with this chosen one, Sister M. opened up this sacred page of her life, yet had scarcely finished the recital when Sister X——— said: "Sister, you need say no more. Sister Mary John Berchmans told me all about it and the happiness it brought her. I would never have presumed to mention it now, but since you have spoken, I want to say that it was all due to Sister Mary John Berchmans' prayer. She told me

that she had begged her dear Master to show some favor to her cherished ones, and she added, with every mark of pleasurable excitement, that He had. 'He was good to her,' Sister Mary John Berchmans said, 'and it made me very happy.' "

Father Giacobbi, the learned theologian of St. Ignatius', declared in a letter as follows:

"As far as I can judge, this remarkable vision was given Sister (M.) as an evidence that Sister Mary John Berchmans received heavenly communications, inexplicable as they might be. It was vouchsafed to that Sister, (who wishes to remain unknown, but who is known by me) as a favor through Sister Mary John Berchmans' merits; as that of which the said Sister (M.), according to her own disclosure, would stand in need in the trials that were to come upon her. . . .

"Finally it was directed to make us understand the nature of Sister Mary John Berchmans' divine communications. What Sister (M.) saw with her bodily eyes, was Christ in His Image, which He formed for her. What Sister Mary John Berchmans saw was Christ also, not appearing to the bodily eyes, but to the mind, and seen in the Image which He had formed of Himself in her very soul, which He had transformed, and to which He had united Himself; for there He is more especially present where He more especially

works. In this way He is said to visit the souls He especially favors, so as to be present in them."

It would seem that Christ Himself would preclude the idea of doubt as to the position of His regard for His loved spouse. By her seeking to help another, she has given the finishing guarantee, as it were, to her own place before God and to the proclaiming of His favors to her. One can scarcely question when God has put the stamp of His approval in such a decided and wonderful manner.

In all she said or wrote, Sister Mary John Berchmans evinced a great personal love of Christ. His perfections as the Man-God especially, appealed to every fiber of her being. Her soul was lifted up to contemplate the loveliness of Him "Who was beautiful above the sons of men," and to treasure the encomiums that gleam like jewels on the pages of the inspired writers. On the back of a little printed poem entitled "O Jesus, Hidden God" Sister wrote these lines, which have been cherished for years by one who loved her: "Thy footsteps are light and fragrant as the hills of morning. Behold He cometh, leaping upon the mountains, hastening over the hilltops. O light-crowned Bridegroom, chosen out of thousands, thy love is flowing over me. I can feel it as it pours down from Thy Face and from Thy Sacred

Heart. Thy beauty and Thy sweetness make me kneel in a wondering joy. The odor of Thy garments is as the odor of frankincense. Show me Thy Face. Let Thy Voice sound in my ears, for Thy Voice is sweet and Thy Face is beautiful. Thou art beautiful, O my Love, sweet and comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army set in array. My Beloved is mine, and I am His, Who feedeth among the lilies till the day break and the shadows flee away."

This personal love of Christ was closely allied to the interests of God especially in the question of charity towards our neighbor. Once in speaking of this virtue, in our relations one to another, Sister was heard to exclaim: "Charity! Oh! it is so important! It is Christ Himself!"

CHAPTER VII.

"Veni, Sancte Spiritus!"

ITH THIS ABSORBING LOVE OF CHRIST and the intimate union it effected with the Beloved in the soul of Sister Mary John Berchmans came that devotion to the Holy Spirit, which she urged on all. She wrote:

"If souls only knew what a wondrous help, what a joy is devotion to the Holy Ghost, that devotion would spread like a flame of fire. I wish that all religious could come to realize what an immense power for advancement in spirituality is this devotion. One makes not steps but leaps forward in the upward path."

The centering of her thoughts on the Holy Spirit was daily growing more and more intense, and in connection with this came the devotion to Our Lady in the Incarnation. In one of her retreat notes we find these words:

"I wonder if it is as people get older that devotion to Our Lady in the Incarnation grows and deepens. I had always had a special attraction to our fair Lady of the Immaculate Conception. That wondrous mystery drew me even when I poorly understood. Not that I have much ad-

vanced in the wisdom of the Lord as yet. But I hardly know of any words that can so move me as with sweetest music, unction, interior delight as these: 'Thou are all fair, O my Mother, and there is not a spot in thee.' 'As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters.' I hope that the day will never come when they will fail to move me."

For five years she remained before the tabernacle in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, listening to the Divine Voice and begging for souls. The glory of God, nay, the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls. This was the lodestone of her life. These two desires appear time and time again in her notes and one may easily assume that they were never long absent from her thoughts. She was winning souls for Christ by her prayers, her sufferings, by her words and influence, and He was communicating Himself to her in marvellous ways. Her life moved in the same narrow circle, with joy sometimes, with trials often; and it was being strengthened and perfected in the strange, yet all-wise way of God.

She felt that the grace was given her to live a life of suffering in union with the Mother of the Redeemer, in her sorrows. For each Dolor lived or suffered, as she told one of the Sisters, God gave her a soul! These dolors were acted out in

her own soul in such a manner as to show her what Mary had experienced in hers. Unfortunately her notes do not record all that she knew of these dolors, and we are the losers thereby.

The following testimony is taken from one of the Sisters, a Sister known to Sister Mary John Berchmans almost from the beginning of her illness. Sister X. had been in need of some slight spiritual help, and had come to the "Little Sacristy" and there found strength and solace. Time and time again she made her way to the upper room, and always, as she said, went away refreshed and comforted in mind and spirit.

To her, Sister confided many things which came to herself at this time. Sister X said that Sister Mary John Berchmans had told her that she was permitted to enter into a union with the Holy Spirit. She had told her much about this devotion and seemed wrapped up in it. She began with the Immaculate Conception, and said that Our Lord had made known to her that to prove to her that He, the Holy Spirit, was uniting Himself to her, He would give her a soul for each union, each mystery of love. "On one particular day, the Feast of Corpus Christi," Sister X. said, "I was before the Blessed Sacrament, feeling a wonderful sweetness towards Our Lord. The feeling was so strong that I could not pray. Then Our Lord came to me. He seemed like a young prince,

asking for my heart, which I gave, oh so willingly! I did not see, but felt all this, and I was full of peace and conscious of a great desire to get very near to Our Divine Lord. That was Thursday. On Sunday morning I went up to see Sister Mary John Berchmans in the Sacristy, and she asked me if I had been in the Chapel on that particular afternoon at that hour. I then told Sister that I had been there at that time, and related what had happened." Then she told this Sister that at the moment it was made known to her that the soul that would be the fruit of her union with Christ was at the moment in the Chapel. Her Divine Spouse told her to rise and look down into the Chapel and that she would see there the first soul that He would give her. She could see the Sister, but could not be sure which one it was. Our Lord reassured her, telling her that that soul would approach her and would herself inform her. Then she paused and said, "To think that you are the first fruits!"

Later on, Sister Mary John Berchmans said that other souls were given as proofs of the different mysteries or unions, and that they would always come to her afterwards and tell her what she had procured from her Spouse for the good of their souls.

"Afterwards, Sister Mary John Berchmans told me that when another soul was given as proof of

other unions, the graces would pass over me first and then over the other soul and so on through the other unions. 'You will have,' she said, 'a share in each.' "

Some of these unions lasted for weeks and weeks, and were very sweet, full of consolation and spiritual tenderness; others were effected only through much sorrow and desolation.

"I knew very little about the next union, perfected at the Feast of the Annunciation, but believe that one of the Sisters had received great graces similar to mine. The soul, of course, was known to Sister Mary John Berchmans, and was each time the result of the union.

"With this union began the devotion to the Holy Ghost. It was revealed to Sister that as the Holy Spirit overshadowed Our Lady at the Incarnation, so He would overshadow her. He had seemed to whisper to her, 'I will put my Spirit upon thee,' and kept saying it a long time, to her great wonder, and only ceased when she answered, 'Lord, put Thy Spirit upon me,' and then Our Lord seemed satisfied.

"Once when I went in to see her for a moment, Sister exclaimed, 'I've wrestled to-day with God for a soul!' She would not always know for what particular soul she had suffered, but later the secret would be made known by the one helped. Sometimes, it was a sister, sometimes a priest, who

would profit by her trials and be brought closer to God. At other times it might be someone in the world whose soul was in peril. In one of the Dolors she said she seemed to see the person to whom Our Lord applied her merits and sufferings, leaning on St. John even as Mary had leaned, on the way back from Calvary, showing that that particular soul had need of extraneous help.

"Speaking of the Dolors of Our Lady, Sister Mary John Berchmans said she would ask that I might become so united to Our Lord that every action of mine would be in union with Him, and that I could elevate each one of the common exercises, such as eating, sleeping, etc., making it an action done in union with the dear Jesus and so rendered very pleasing to the Eternal Father."

"She wished me to say daily the prayer inspired by the words of Christ, 'Make me one with Thee, as Thou art one with the Father.' 'And that,' she said, 'would be the highest thing for *me*.' " Sister Sister X. added: "I have always said it since at Mass, and always feel better for saying it; I seemed lifted up as if I became more one with Him."

"When the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus came around, Sister M. John Berchmans asked me to say the Holy Name often, often; but to say it, as it were, with the lips of Mary. It would then seem that Mary herself were calling Him by

that sweet name, and it would give him the same pleasure as when of old He had heard it from her dear lips.

"After one of these purifications of her spirit, she was very happy, just resting in Our Lord, as it were; loving Him most tenderly and wondering how she could tell Him of her love. It came to her that she might speak to him with the words of Mary, but what words? Suddenly she found that the *'Magnificat'* leaped to her lips and she began, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior,' and went on in a transport of love. As she was saying all this and trying to express her love for her Lord, it seemed to her that the Lord drew near to her and embraced her so tenderly that she seemed to feel it all through her being. When I came in, Sister Mary John Berchmans was all aglow with a wonderful light and love on her face. I asked her later, where Our Lord was when He embraced her, and she turned and looked at the spot. 'To my right,' she said, 'and near the picture of Our Lady of the Rosary.' "

The picture, mentioned above, was close to Sister's bed, and almost within reach, in the tiny room which was hers for some time. This "cell" is one of the smallest in the infirmary, yet it was large enough for the King of Hosts to enter and to make His presence felt. There He had come;

more than once, probably, to sanctify the soul of this elect one and to brighten her life by these assurances of His love. The nun, who was privileged to know something of these supernatural visitations, spoke feelingly of the sensations she experienced in entering this apartment: "In my mind, it was like a shrine, full of the thought of God Himself, and of high and holy things."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Who is this that cometh up from the desert leaning on her beloved?"

N 1912, HER ILLNESS began about February 2nd, the Feast of the Purification. She had almost finished her share of the Dolors of Mary, not knowing what was coming next, holding her soul in a state of waiting and strong expectation.

It had happened that for three years in succession, on the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, Sister Mary John Berchmans had been anointed. She was permitted to know that she was not going to die (after each of these anointings) and that the sickness was allowed in order that she would receive the benefit of the Sacrament for her purification, and that she might be prepared for greater graces.

Concerning this illness Sister X——— continued: "I asked Sister, (since she seemed always to know), if this were the same as the other, but she said slowly and very earnestly, 'Oh! I do not know. I have only two more of Our Lady's mysteries to finish, and then the life of Mary will be completed in my soul. There are still the mystery

of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven and the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin." She seemed to be finishing quickly, since she was so near the end—the death of Mary—and the last, of course, would be the fullness of the union of the Holy Ghost with her in Heaven. That would be the end of God's work in her on earth, since He had wrought in her by the same power as in the Blessed Mother herself in these unions, and had thus overshadowed her—He Who had overshadowed the soul of Mary.

"The next time I came to her she was too ill to speak. I bent over her and asked her if she knew me and she whispered 'Yes,' as she smiled; but I never had the consolation of speaking to her again.

"The union of the Dolors was to be completed soon by that last illness, and the final mysteries of the Assumption and the Coronation of Mary were to be exemplified in her. She seemed in expectation of something. The Spouse was near and He would soon assume to Himself His beautiful one and lead her to the Eternal Nuptials."

Once when this Sister, to whom Sister Mary John Berchmans had confided so freely, came to her sick room, Sister exclaimed, "I have finished the Dolors of Mary." Sister replied, "Sister, I wonder, since you love the Blessed Mother so well, that you have not finished the *life* of Our

Lady in her many mysteries of the Rosary!" "Ah, Sister," she said, "it is just the same. It is only a continuation and my part in the 'Assumption of Our Lady' is yet to come!" Sister Mary John Berchmans then told that same dear friend that some great sickness was in store for her; and, "Who knows," she added, "perhaps this will be the end of all my sufferings; and I shall be with my Mother soon, and more like her than ever!"

It was, indeed, the last illness, and those who witnessed her terrible sufferings and agony during that painful time, can easily understand that she completed the cycle of her trials on that death bed; and that she must have followed in spirit the years of the Mother's separation from her Divine Son in all the torture of the heaviness of soul, and in the hardships that were hers during those last days.

About a week before the end Sister Mary John Berchmans seemed failing. Her heart was growing weaker each day, and the lungs were filling. All hope was abandoned, and her Sisters, both South at the Ramona Convent at the time, were sent for by Mother Provincial.

They came in haste and were permitted to remain with their dying sister as much as possible. But Sister Mary John Berchmans' sufferings were so great, that after the first tender greetings, where both joy and sorrow were strangely min-

gled, the two sisters were compelled to withdraw. On account of the intensity of her sufferings the doctor had ordered opiates which procured some respite for the overburdened heart. Although one of her sisters was permitted to remain in the sick room during the day and the other to take up the watch during the night, there was but meagre communication. When Sister awoke from the effect of the medicine administered, she seemed happy to see her dear Sisters and smiled lovingly on them, but speech was impossible. After a few moments, however, her breathing would become so labored that all attempts at communication ceased. They could only look on, and pray for help for the sufferer. Thus it was that the Spouse was trying His own, was chastening the white soul of His loved one that she might be worthy of the joys awaiting her. The cross was laid upon her shoulders and the strength of all her love was requisite to keep it there, and to bear its ignominy and obloquy with love and patience. For almost two days her trials were such that her dear ones watching at her bedside, and heart-broken as they were at the impending separation, prayed for her deliverance.

After the worst of these attacks, when she had rested for awhile, she awoke with prayer on her lips. "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," she was heard to say. When

she perceived that her sister was bending over her and had understood what she had breathed out almost unconsciously, she said, "It is good to give glory to the Blessed Trinity always. I love to say the *'Gloria'* ";* and, after a short pause, she added, "and the 'Our Father.' " Then she began to recite the "Our Father" very slowly until near the end she seemed tired and appeared to continue her prayer silently, if one might judge from the movement of her lips. Afterwards, she clasped her hands on her breast and seemed lost again in prayer.

This lapsing into a silence apparently so deep that it seemed to carry her far away from human cognizance, was a source of great grief to her sisters, especially as there had formerly existed such intimacy and unreserve. They missed her beautiful smile and her gracious words of kindness and thoughtful love. Later, when one of her sisters complained of this and mentioned it to Father Sardi, the old priest replied, "Why, Sister Mary John Berchmans was wrapt up in her God. She was very close to Him, united to Him even on earth. She was a great saint," he added very earnestly. "You must not grieve because of her seeming withdrawal from her loved ones, but you must remember that she belonged to God in a very special manner. She was absorbed in her God."

It was the afternoon of the 16th of March, when hope still lingered in the hearts of those who could not bear the thought of separation. One of her sisters, who had been with her all the morning, was sent from the sick room awhile. As she passed through one of the rooms, a book, recording the life of the great Saint whose feast would begin on the morrow, caught her eye. As she took up the book, she found that she had opened it at the page wherein is attested the fact that the great clan to which she belonged had been blessed in a special manner by the glorious Apostle of one famous green isle. With keen interest she read that those of her name who had made religion and obedience their virtues during life, would be judged kindly in death by the Saint who constituted himself their special protector.

The next day the great feast would be celebrated in joy and merriment, and hope was sufficiently strong for her imagination to see her dear invalid revive as of old, and smile upon her again; that they would both speak of these days of sorrow. Joy and suffering lie close together. Yet with the mysticism inherent in the Celt, something of the significance of it all touched the reader and when, that night, she was advised to retire to rest, she resisted all efforts, and declared that she too, that night of all nights, would watch over her sister. Later, the full meaning of the warning, for

such it proved, came to her with renewed insistence. It was as if a word of consolation had come to her from the great apostle himself. He would judge kindly those of the race who had made obedience and religion the mainstay of their lives. The word "obedience" had impressed her at the time. Her dear sister resting at that moment, as she thought, so easily in the room above, had always been remarkable for her obedience. Therefore, death would be sweet to her and God's judgment kindly. How could it be otherwise when all her life, obedience and religion—only another name for union with God—had been the guiding marks of that existence lived only for her Creator.

Henceforth the 17th, the day of days for her father's clan, and her mother's intense devotion, made unique by a thousand happy memories, would be a day of earnest prayer and deep recollection; a day of reunion linked forever with the name of her beloved one who had gone before.

The physician who was attending Sister Mary John Berchmans had declared that even the very lifting of her hands meant great pain to her, and that even a noise might jar the heart and hasten the end. In the early afternoon a breeze caused the screen that was placed near the open door of the infirmary to be blown down. The Sister who was in the room at the time hastened forward, thinking that her carelessness had caused the

death of the sufferer. But Sister Mary John Berchmans lay back among her pillows seemingly in a calm, peaceful slumber. Later, when this Sister, who was still attending her, had raised a glass of water to the feverish lips of the patient, a mist of tears had gushed to her eyes and blinded her for a moment; her hand trembled and the water was spilled all over the soft white woolen shawl that Sister wore. Sister Mary John Berchmans glanced calmly up at the weeping Sister, and then down at the white garment which was drenched. Slowly and carefully it was removed and a black shawl replaced it. The sorrowing nurse could only wrap her dear one in the dark mantle and feel that death was very near.

A picture of Gemma Galgani, the saintly little victim of the Passion of Christ, hung opposite Sister's bed, where she could lift her eyes to it. Aided, no doubt, by her confessor, the Reverend Father Sardi, an Italian, and an ardent advocate of Gemma, Sister Mary John Berchmans had shown a special regard for the blessed lover of Christ's suffering. That last afternoon she looked for a time very earnestly towards the picture, and then smiled that long, sweet smile of hers, as she said aloud in a pleasant, happy voice: "Gemma!" as if saluting someone whom she loved. Her exclamation and look startled her two sisters and the other Sister who was near her at

the time. Her glad cry was all the more remarkable for she had been silent all that day, absorbed in prayer, and seemingly lost to the world.

Another remarkable instance is also recorded of that afternoon. She had been lying with her eyes closed, when all at once she opened them very wide and gazed at the opposite wall. As she *looked,* the others in the room *looked* at the wall also, thinking that something there had caught her attention, but as she continued to gaze at the same place they turned to behold her face. She *appeared* in perfect health for the time, with her eyes wide and beautiful, *seeming* pleased and happy, and oh! so calm. One of the Sisters in the room became disturbed and said, "See how intently she stares, and yet there is nothing," and then added, "Behold that smile!" The others could only take in the scene and wonder. Only a thin veil to separate the unseen that the Hand of God may draw aside for His loved ones.

A nurse had been called in to assist the Infirmarian, who was necessarily greatly fatigued by her many duties. That night Sister Mary John Berchmans had asked the nurse to procure her a large handkerchief. It was brought, and Sister then asked the nurse to arrange it beneath her chin, and to pin it above her forehead. When her two sisters came into the room to take up their watch for the night, they looked at her in astonishment

and then at each other. Sister Mary John Berchmans looked so very much like certain pictures of the Blessed Mother where the veiling is carried along the sides of the face, that they were both startled. The cloth also was like the bandage that is at times put on the faces of the dead. Had she prepared the death-cloth on purpose, so that all things, even the least, might be in readiness? However, it lent to her chastened beauty a peculiarly noble and dignified aspect, the while it caught the hearts of her sisters in a terrible tightness—the tightness of impending woe, and made them feel that that night would witness the end.

The little candle burnt low—the nurse had placed it so that the rays might not disturb the dying Sister, and the hours wore on. About ten o'clock the change came. Some of the Sisters sent for, said the Rosary, the Litany of the Blessed Mother, and many well-known prayers. Sister seemed but half-conscious, yet looked calm and peaceful, and one could scarcely believe that death was so near. About midnight her breath became short and gasping, but in a quiet sort of way, and continued so almost to the end. She lay in the arms of Sister Mary Marcella, while her other sister held the blessed candle in her chilling fingers, and at times lifted the crucifix to her lips. A little before the end, she moved and looked all around the bed, as though she would take leave

of the dear friends there. Her eyes lingered lovingly on the face of her sister kneeling close beside her, and then as if she missed the other dearly loved sister, she attempted to turn slightly to her left as she began, "Where is—?" Sister Mary Marcella, who was holding her dying sister in her arms, feeling that she was the one sought, reassured her by her whisper, "I am right here." Then as though she were satisfied, she directed her gaze steadily forward, so that all perceived and noted the change, and in a voice, vibrating with the sweetest emotions of gladness and gratitude, she exclaimed, in a tone loud enough to be heard by all, "My Savior!"—It was her last word—her last look, as with a long-drawn sigh, her spirit rose to meet her God—her Savior.

Surely He would be there to meet her—He, the Spouse, Who had loved her so well, and Whom she had served so faithfully. Love was ever on the watch-tower looking for the Beloved, and with what rejoicing would she go forward to the meeting!

"My Savior!" Surely He was there ready and waiting even as He had been ready and waiting to receive His sweet Mother when she drew near to the Gates of Paradise. Who could doubt that He, Who had lifted the ardent soul of Sister Mary John Berchmans, even in life, to a knowledge of His sweetness and power, Who had re-

vealed wonderful and hidden things to her, Who had held her close to Him even here during her exile, and Who had shown her special marks of His love, would meet her at the threshold of His Home and welcome her to His Heart? She had suffered for Him and loved Him long and ardently, and now His arms were open, and at last His loved one rested, like a happy child, therein!

When it was known that Sister Mary John Berchmans had been taken out of this world, the sorrow of those who had known her was great. A cry seemed to go forth that she who had meant so much was no more, and the grief was universal. A tribute appeared in one of the papers entitled, "Much Loved Nun Passes Away," to be followed by others telling the story of the loving hearts left behind. The following "Appreciation" written by one of her former pupils, Mary Malloy, speaks for itself and tells how she was honored and loved:

" 'The world is full of great women,' says Ida Tarbell. There is one less in the world to-day. For if any woman deserved the title 'great' in its deepest holiest signification, it was the admirable teacher, the gentle guide, the dear, familiar friend who departed this life on the Feast of St. Patrick, 1912, Sister Mary John Berchmans O'Neill, H.N.

"So strongly developed in her were not only the cloistral virtues, but also the more ardent and

virile qualities of holiness; so high were her ideals; so readily did she recognize and salute whatever in others was lofty or noble; so constantly did she entertain all 'high-erected thoughts deep-seated in a heart of courtesy' that her life was an inspiration even to casual acquaintances; nay, even to those who knew her by hearsay alone: and a tower of strength, a house of refuge to those whom Providence had placed near her as sisters in Christ, as pupils, and as friends.

"To a brilliant intellect, to remarkable attainments, she united that gift which seems the peculiar attribute of all great women—the genius of personality. And in her the greatness of this gift was proportioned to the shortness of her life. Those who are to die young, and in a brief space of years are destined to accomplish much, are always generously endowed, and waited upon by circumstance. Hence the early death of Sister John Berchmans explains in some measure her great personal charms and the variety of her talents; explains the many opportunities that came to her for doing good; explains the loyal regard of those who sought her in life and mourn her in death.

"Hers was a nature so rich that it could complement the love and fill the needs of every friend; a sympathy so intuitive that it pierced the sorrows and doubts of all who came to her for comfort and counsel; a charity so ardent that it seemed the

very pulse of her being. So vital and so lasting was the influence exerted by her that she saw the members of her successive classes leave her as pupils only to return to her as friends. So fully did she realize and so strictly did she follow the grace of vocation, that her example drew many young women into the fold of the community she loved and served so well. And it is sad yet salutary to know that many of those who sat in her classrooms gathered around her deathbed as sisters in Christ; that they who in former years extended to her the little courtesies of the pupil, were privileged to assist in the last tender duties to the dead.

"Two immortalities are hers—that of God and of memory. She lives in Him and in the hearts of those who will live well that they may remember her worthily; who having known her, will find it easier to practice the manly-womanly virtues of courage, honor, purity, charity; who will keep themselves erect in spirit that they may hereafter meet her gaze.

"And to these friends, poignantly unforgetful as they are of her unbounding vigor of mind and heart, her indomitable perseverance, her unfailing kindness and patience, it seems difficult to realize that a spirit so vital and eager has been withdrawn into the shadow and silence of death. That the vivid interest and zest in living; the cheerful courage, the lambent humor—the gaiety almost—

of one who never strayed so far from God as to grow old, will be manifested no more in Time.

"The habit of loss is hard to acquire. Yet so well-rounded was her short life, so closely did she keep to God and the eternal verities throughout her years that sorrow seems almost an intrusion upon the closing scene of life so perfect. In her early girlhood she gave herself to God; in her mid-womanhood she crowned her gift of a pure life with a holy death; and the tenderness of Providence arranged that she should die on the Feast of St. Patrick and be laid to rest on that of St. Joseph—two saints whose names were often on her lips. And mindful of all this, not one of the many who knew and loved her, could wish her life increased by the length of a prayer.

"She has indeed passed from us—but only to wait for us—to graciously welcome those who follow her into the house of God and to lessen for them the first strangeness of Eternity. If no one can be accounted happy until he is dead, she truly can be called so, for she has completed that greatest of master works, a noble life: she possesses the tenderest of fames, the memory of loyal friends: and in Him Who 'giveth His beloved sleep' she finds her reward and her repose."

On the 19th of March, another feast made dear through the many years of service in the school dedicated to St. Joseph in San Francisco,

the Requiem Mass was sung for the repose of Sister Mary John Berchmans' soul. The chapel of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary was crowded with the friends and the old pupils, and the many priests who had known her. Among these latter were the Reverend P. E. Mulligan, Pastor of St. Joseph's, Reverend Father Keane, at the present time Bishop of Sacramento, celebrant of the Mass, while Fathers Cantwell, Hartnett and Sullivan, all connected with her years of activity, assisted, and did honor to her memory by their presence and their prayers. Contrary to all precedent and acting under a strong impulse, the Reverend P. J. Keane began to speak of Sister Mary John Berchmans. He told of the years he had known her and of the work she had carried on in the parish schools of San Francisco, in such eloquent strains, that all were moved. It was a panegyric glowing with the fervor and charity of a generous heart. It was a loving tribute to one who had loved and served her gracious Lord and King.

Only the writings of Sister Mary John Berchmans remain to attest her merit and reflect her soul. They show her as the chosen one of Christ, the helper of His little ones, the child of His tender Mother, and His own loving Spouse. These notes contain the glowing thoughts that tell the story

of her suffering and of her love. They speak of Calvary and the sorrowful way, but they seem to lead on to the lofty heights of Thabor and the glories thereof. May they win many to God, and so further her desire for souls.

The "Spiritual Notes" of Sister Mary John Berchmans, which form the second but more important part of this work, follow here. They drew forth from the pen of two of our most eminent clergymen some splendid and most sincere testimonials. The first forms the "Foreword" of this book, and the second is here appended. Both letters show the esteem in which this Sister was held, and form one of the reasons for the editing of these pages.

"I wish to thank you for the privilege of reading the Spiritual Diary of Sister Mary John Berchmans. I felt that I was looking into the soul of a spouse of Christ and beloved of Him and much favored by Him. I was illumined, uplifted and inspired as I read and reread the pages of your beloved sister. It is a comfort to know that there should be in our very midst, breathing our air, dealing familiarly with us, souls as highly favored of God as was Sister Mary John Berchmans, and souls that gave themselves unreservedly, as she most certainly did. It would be unwise to hold this treasure for yourself. It is certainly

the will of the good God that others should be edified and inspired by the unveiling of a favored soul and that others should join with you in blessing God for 'the great things which the Most High hath done' to His little handmaiden.

"I recall my visit to Sister Mary John Berchmans. I was commissioned to visit her by one whose memory is enshrined in the grateful hearts of all the Daughters of the Holy Names who had the privilege to know and to love him. I refer to Rev. Robert E. Kenna, S. J., of holy and happy memory. Knowing that I was passing through Oakland, he urged me to call at the Convent on the Lake and see Sister Mary John Berchmans. 'She is,' he said, 'a little saint, very dear to God, highly favored by Him, and sealed, as He always does seal His dear ones, with great sufferings of mind and body.'

"I met Sister and gave her the loving message of him whom she revered as 'the father of her soul.' She smiled gratefully. We conversed for some time. I do not recall our theme, but I do know that I felt on leaving her that I had met a saint, and I was comforted by her assurance that on earth and in Heaven she would pray for me. Even as I write, a feeling of sweetness and unutterable tenderness comes into my soul.

"I should be much surprised if the dear Lord does not exalt His little Spouse by granting super-

natural favors by her intercession. Since her death, I have ever felt that she was with Him in Heaven. Hoping then, dear Sister, that you will not delay to put these writings before your Superior with the humble and urgent request that they be given to the light, so that many may profit by their reading and many souls be drawn to God.

"I am devotedly in the Sacred Heart,

"RICHARD A. GLEESON, S. J.,
"Ex-Provincial of California.

"St. Ignatius' College,
"San Francisco, California.
"Feast of St. John Berchmans,
"November 26th, 1924."

PART II

The Spiritual Notes of Sister Mary John Berchmans

Quis Ascendet in Montem Domini?
Psalm 23

Quis Ascendet in Montem Domini?

Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord?

Quis ascendet . . . .? aut quis stabit in loco sancto eius?

Who shall ascend . . . .? or who shall stand in His holy place?

Innocens manibus et mundo corde

The innocent of hand and the pure in heart.

Hic accipiet Benedictionem a Domino; et misericordiam a Deo salutari suo

He shall receive a blessing from the Lord; and mercy from God, His Savior.

Haec est generatio quaerentium eum, quaerentium faciem Dei Jacob

This is the generation of them that seek Him, of them that seek the Face of the God of Jacob.

HER LOVE FOR CHRIST IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

1908. God has been wondrously sweet and gentle to me during the past year. I feel drawn to write these few notes to aid my memory in the coming days, to recall the tender mercies of the Lord, in case He should withdraw Himself, or I should return to exterior duties with their consequent distractions.

This whole year of my illness has been His time of mercy. Looking back on it, I count it as the richest of my life. I had so feared to take up life again, and drag on the days half sick, half well, and be a burden to others. It cost much to nature to bow my will to *this cross*. At first I could not. This life of inactivity seemed so opposed to every tendency of my nature. The dear Lord had to be very patient with me. Yet He gave me that grace to abandon myself to His pleasure that He might do whatsoever He willed. Then, as the days went on, He removed all the *feared* bitterness. Instead He filled them with love and peace. He had wanted only the utter resignation to His Will.

Then for months, He *drew me to love Him in the Blessed Sacrament** with a deeper and more

*These sub-titles and italics are not found in the original papers of Sister Mary John Berchmans. They are given here by way of emphasis, and to help the reader follow the sequence of these divine revelations.

intimate love than I had ever had. It seemed as if I could never get enough of Him. I hungered for Him in the Holy Eucharist with an insatiable yearning. I could not seem to be happy away from His Presence. I could never tell Him often enough how I loved Him. I would spend hours repeating that, or in just loving Him. He was the one great, the only need of my life. With permission, I made no meditations on other subjects. I just loved and loved Our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. This love filled my whole being. There seemed nothing else but love. It was all His work. He poured into my soul this torrent of love, and I poured it forth again in prayers and yearnings.

THE FATHER

Then without my perceiving He gave me subjects of contemplation. He drew my soul to love the Father, spending days in a growing reverence and love of the Father. It was not that I was thinking, rather that I was *living,* in a deepening realization of the Father. This continued for weeks, yet I was loving our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Then my soul was filled with a knowledge and a realization of the wondrous beauty of Mary. I lived for days in each of these contemplations. In my soul I realized the work of the Adorable Trinity in her most pure Heart, especially

the work of the Holy Ghost in the different mysteries of Mary's life.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

In the Immaculate Conception the gifts of the Holy Ghost to her, gifts of grace, of beauty. His love for her in this mystery: In His work in her soul in the Incarnation my soul lived for days. In the Pentecostal Descent, and in the year of waiting before the Assumption, my soul seemed to be more and more deeply drawn to realize all that the Holy Spirit was to Mary, especially in connection with the Holy Eucharist. I cannot here speak fully of the wondrous beauty of all these things. It was not that I was thinking or knowing these things, rather that I was held, day after day, my soul gazing, gazing deeply, and more deeply into the soul of Mary, drinking in the beauty of her wondrous soul, beholding in reverence of adoration, the wondrous relations between that soul and God, especially God the Holy Ghost.

By degrees I was spending the hours, not thinking, not consciously loving, but just letting my soul lie prostrate before Him in adoration. Now and then I would consciously love Him, but my constant attitude of soul was an utter adoration, sinking down—down before Him. At the beginning of my prayer I would offer the hours especially in union with Mary in some mystery

of the Passion. Then I could not revert to that intention.

There kept growing in my soul a desire of Him, not merely of His Presence, but Himself. That He was on the altar was not enough; I must have Him uniting with my soul at every instant. This desire kept increasing every hour, until at times the anguish of yearning was so great I could hardly bear it. This striving, this longing for Him with heart and soul, mind and body, spent and wearied me. At times would come the sweetness, the stillness of some wonderful union with Him, and when it would be taken from me, the desire for Him was the more intense. I felt I could not live without Him. Then by degrees I felt Him, not merely coming, but being one with my soul, in a union wondrously close and sweet. I held Him in my very soul, or rather *one* with my soul. I cannot express this union, but it was so real that I realized I had Him as never before, or as I had never thought it possible to have Him. I was constantly offering Him to the Father, not by my words or prayers, rather by my very living, and holding Him in my soul, or *one* with my soul. I do not need to make the offering of prayers. He does it or rather He is. It seems that with Him I "live to make intercession for the brethren." There is not so much the former conscious act of loving, or adoration, or desire, as a union. I seem

to need to keep a silence of soul, without thought or feelings—I mean any other active feelings than the reverence of union. Thoughts or feelings are like distractions. To me it is as the stillness of the Great Sacrifice. I do not pray, as before, for others, or for intentions. I just half form the thought or the will deep down in the stillness of my soul, and then I know that "He, the Great High Priest, makes supplication." To stay longer on the intentions, or to formulate them, troubles me. It seems to fret my soul. As for vocal prayers, I have, since over two months ago, been unable to use them. This inability worried me, but the Confessor said not to trouble about them. So I do not. I wait on God's action. I know that I pray, only in a different way. I make offering in union with Jesus for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

It is three months since I wrote the foregoing. He kept me in that state of union with Him, that hush or quiet of union. Then came a change. During the days of the Forty Hours Devotion, I could do nothing but gaze and gaze at the Sacred Host. I could not pray. I could not revert to the former union. I could only look at the Sacred Host. It was as if He were causing faith to grow by this course of action. I seemed to

realize that. In the two or three days following I seemed to have lost my former power of praying. The sense of that quiet union was gone. I could not unite with Him in offering. I seemed to have lost Him utterly. I tried to use aspirations and prayers, but these were an effort as it had been so long since I had used them. My soul seemed to be without rest in anything. I kept seeking Him in every way.

Then by degrees there began to dawn in my soul a new and deep love for the *Humanity of Our Lord*. This may not express it perfectly, but it seems the clearest way to me. I felt drawn to kiss His Hands and Feet, to worship, in deepest love, His Sacred Heart; and then later to adore His Sacred Soul. I could only touch on this last; I felt too awed to *dwell* on the thought of His Sacred Soul. I would go down in the depths of adoration before it. It seemed too sacred for my gaze.

I concluded that God had seen I was not fit to continue in that former prayer, so in His sweet mercy He had condescended to give me this way of loving Him. I was content to accept any manifestation of His Will.

This adoration and love of Our Lord's Humanity kept deepening and increasing. I seemed to live in the realization of its worth and beauty. Gradually, I was being drawn into a sort of union

with our Lord in the beginning of His Passion. I would spend days in a union with Him in its various stages. I lived in a growing realization. There was not the former bliss of love or of adoration, but a suffering with Him in the bleakness of His Agony.

When He allowed my soul to unite with Him in His acceptation of His Father's Will in His Agony, in my union of suffering and sadness, I begged Him to let me comfort Him a little, to offer Him my love in some way that might console Him in the slightest. In answer, there kept rising in my soul the quiet question, *"Can you drink the Chalice?"* And the knowledge was given me that some trial was asked of me. In deepest adoration I responded, "Yes, my Lord, if You give me grace."

The next day I became ill. By this illness I was, of course, separated from Him in the Blessed Sacrament though each day He gave Himself to me in Holy Communion. This deprivation of His Sacramental Presence was loss indeed, but another loss was added to it. He withdrew the realization of Himself *utterly* and *completely*. I could not *think* of Him in the Tabernacle; and, of course, not in my soul. I could not pray. He had caused me to lie there utterly alone, without Him, except for a union of my will with Him. For weeks I lay there unable to love Him, to think of Him.

There was in my soul such a sense of *alone-ness,* as I had never thought it possible for any one to experience. It seemed each instant that I could not bear it one second longer. Yet all the time there was a sort of realization of the union, the oneness of my will with His. . . .

This illness, besides its own necessary discomforts, gave occasion, through my intercourse with others, for certain other exterior trials and misunderstandings. On every side, it was a time of purification for me.

THE PRESENTATION OF MARY

When I was anointed on the feast of our Lady's Presentation, I felt that our Sweet Mother had been getting me ready during my illness for some closer union with her Divine Son. I became better after Extreme Unction, though I still remained ill and in bed until near Christmas. But there was a wondrous peace in my soul. Our Lord had not returned, but I could lift my soul in prayer, especially in the Triduum preparatory to the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. During those three days my soul lived in a contemplation of the work of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in the soul of Mary. My soul remained in adoration of their work and of their gifts to her.

THE INCARNATION

In the nine days before Christmas, I made a novena in union with Our Lady in honor of the nine months from the first moment of the Incarnation. On the first day I reverenced Mary and worshipped Jesus in her and with her. I thought that each of the days would be passed in like manner. But on the morning of that first day I was moved to adore God the Father in the omnipotent work of the Incarnation, to present again to His gaze all the gifts He had given to the Soul of Christ, to offer Him again the joy, the bliss He had in the contemplation of the Soul of Jesus, especially at the moment of the Incarnation. My soul contemplated in deepest adoration the peculiarly sacred relation between God the Father and the Soul of Jesus Christ. It would take too many words to explain the wonder and beauty of this realization as it was given to my soul.

The next day I was drawn to adore God the Son in the moment of the Incarnation and in his work in the creation of that Soul that was to be His forever, offering to Him the joy, the bliss, He had in the moment of His union with His Soul and Body.

Then the knowledge was given to my soul that Jesus would unite my soul and body to Himself, not, of course, as in the Hypostatic Union, but

yet in a union real and actual. I realized that this union was a reality, a fact that was being accomplished. I could no more doubt it than I could hesitate about my own existence. It was also shown me that as Jesus used his Soul and Body as instruments to work for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, so by this union would He use my soul and body. As by the *union of His Divinity to His Soul and Body* the actions of these became of infinite value, so by His union with my soul and body would He render my actions efficacious for souls and for the glory of God. All this was clearly shown in my soul.

During the remainder of the nine days, I lived in a growing realization of this union. At Christmas time and thereafter, the sense of this union deepened and increased—the realization of the presence of the Soul and Body of Jesus in my soul or rather one with my soul. Then for days my soul gazed on the Soul of Christ. Then I lived for some days, my soul adoring the Soul of Christ—present in me. Again would come a deepened sense of the union. The whisper would keep rising in my soul *"Adore the Divinity with the Soul of Christ,"* and I would be drawn to do just that for days, adoring the Divinity in union with the Soul of Christ and as that Sacred Soul adored it, especially at the moment of the Incarnation. I seemed to realize the wonder of the Divinity as given to us

in Holy Communion. After this the continuous murmur kept rising in my soul: *"Adore the Divine Beauty in union with the Soul of Christ."* I did this for days, dwelling on the adoration of the Divine Beauty as the Soul of Jesus adored it, especially at the moment of the Incarnation. His soul was so one with mine that it seemed as if His adoration was mine. Then came the impulsion in my soul: *"Adore the Divine Beauty of the Soul of Christ."* I tried to put this aside as I did not understand; but the murmur was continuous until I yielded, and remained for days in an adoration and contemplation of the Divine Beauty of the Soul of Christ.

When I was drawn to any one of these movements, I could do nothing but that. I could not revert to the former ones. My soul was absorbed. For instance, when I was drawn to gaze on the *Soul of Christ*—of course not with my eyes or with my mind, but with my soul—I could do nothing but gaze and gaze. There was not the consciousness of the union, or a sense of adoration, so much as just a living continuously in that act—a gazing of my soul on the Soul of Christ. When this passed to the next movement I could no longer gaze. I could only revert to it with my memory. I so clearly realize that there is nothing of my work in all this. It is the sweet condescension of God to me, His least.

After each of these mercies, the realization of the *presence of the Body and Soul of Jesus Christ* increased in my soul. The sense of this union gave me such joy, such bliss, swaying my soul, and filling me with such lightness, such sweetness, that at times it seemed I could not bear more. At intervals, for the space of a half hour or an hour, I would be deprived of the sense of union. The anguish of this loss was very great. After each period of deprivation and yearning He would come with greater sweetness.

I was drawn deeply into prayer, and the whisper would arise in my soul: *"Worship the Adorable Trinity with the Body and Soul of Christ."* I did this for some time, contemplating and adoring. I seemed to realize the worship that was being given, and that Jesus was so one with me that He was letting His worship be as mine.

Then in my soul "Worship the Eternal Being with the Body and Soul of Christ," and the knowledge was given to my soul that inasmuch as the Soul and Body of Jesus had to be created, they were creatures, yet by the Hypostatic Union they could give adequate worship to the Eternal Uncreated Being of God. I adored and contemplated and offered His worship as mine. It is not that I do anything; but my soul is held in union, and I realize in that the Adorable Trinity is being worshipped.

Later, in my soul came *"Worship the Divine Beauty with the beauty of the Body and Soul of Jesus Christ."* In that adoration it seemed as if I were offering all the beauty of His Soul and Body—a reflex of the Uncreated Beauty. I cannot express here the wonder and the sweetness of all these things.

Then a *sense of the sanctity of God* was given deep in my soul, and the murmur *"Worship the Sanctity of the All-Holy with the Purity of the Body and Soul of Jesus Christ."* My soul was drawn deep into that adoration and contemplation. I contemplated deeply and more deeply the Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ. While my soul was in this union, Our Lord said to me that the Purity of His Body and Soul would be given to me that I might offer it for souls—a reparation for the sins of the world. This promise was repeated a few more times to my soul when I was in the depths of this adoration of the sanctity of God.

"WHO SHALL ASCEND?"

On one occasion I wished to worship each of the Three Divine Persons by offering to each the love and reverence of the others. As I began to form the intention to offer this as my worship to the Father, I was stopped instantly, and I could not lift my thoughts from under the weight that held

them down. Then in my soul arose the question clear and distinct: "Who shall ascend unto the mountain of the Lord?" In the realization of my lowliness I could not answer. I knew this was as a reproof, that I had trespassed, though unintentionally. Again the question was asked me insistently, until in my sorrow I answered, "The innocent of hand and clean of heart!" Then I said to Our Lord: "O dear Lord, did You not give me to understand that my soul was pure and cleansed from sin?" The knowledge was given to my soul that some greater purity was needed before I could approach the Father. Since then I have not been able to *think* the Father's name in prayer.

At another time, when my soul was drawn deep in prayer, the voice that I knew as of God said in my soul, *"I will make thee to dwell in my holy tabernacle; thou shalt not go out from thence."* My soul went down more deeply in adoration, but I cried: "O dear Lord! do not let me presume. Do not let any word come to me that is not clearly from you." Again it was said. Though I recognized, I could not understand; and again I cried, "Oh! my God! My God! do not let me presume! Then He said with a quiet firmness, I cannot call it severity—"Do you then wish to draw back?" All I could answer in the knowledge that was given me was—"My God! My God! Thou knowest!" I seemed to understand that some suffering

was to be required of me and that He must have my consent. I did not understand what was meant by His word, nor do I yet. But I believe, and I wait. In His own good time He will manifest His Will.

LOVE FOR OUR LADY

I began to realize that I had not been loving Our Lady as heretofore. I had not neglected her intentionally. I had only followed the movement of God. I could do nothing but as He gave me to do. He had held my soul in each of these actions, adoring, contemplating, and unable to revert to anything else. Yet a great wave of love filled my soul for Mary. I seemed never to have loved her rightly in return for her goodness. I asked Our Lord to offer to His sweet Mother the love of His Heart for me as if it were mine.

My soul was drawn deeply into prayer, and realization was given to my soul that Our Lord had offered to His sweet Mother the love of His Sacred Heart for me and as if it were mine before all the angels and saints of Heaven. Then it was shown to my soul that Our Blessed Lady had received this as my offering, and because of the great joy she had received, she had said to Our Lord that she would never see His Heart but in union with mine, and she would never see my heart but in union with His. This was shown

clearly to my soul. It is as if my soul sees without the need or the use of the senses or even of thought. I cannot explain it. I only know and believe. My soul continued to *increase in love for Mary*. I wanted to do something for her in slight return for her wondrous love and kindness to me during my whole life. I asked Our Lord, if it were His sweet Will, that I might write something about *Our Lady,* something that might increase love for her in the hearts of her children. I asked also that I might write nothing fanciful about her, nothing but the truth of God that might be given me by the Holy Ghost. I do not know why I asked this favor or why I am noting it here. It seemed that I was impelled to it by the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps because of this request, later, when I was in prayer, Our Lord said to me that He would give me His Mother to be my Mother in some special way. While I believed, I could not understand how this wondrous mercy would be given to me. I said to him, "Dear Lord, if this be true, why do I not feel at least the great joy I experienced when I was made a *Child of Mary?*" Our Lord said to me, "There is yet much to be done in your soul." Then in my soul I realized and worshipped. In His own good time He will do the work; and then I will have my sweet Mother in the special way He promised. At first, I thought he was giving her to me at the moment

He spoke—that is why I questioned how it was I did not experience the wonderful joy that should attend this mercy. His next words made me think that it was a promise to be fulfilled when my soul was ready. In any case He has been sweet and gracious to me, and in fullest trust I wait on His Will.

A CLOSER UNION WITH CHRIST

By degrees I began to yearn for a closer union with Our Lord. It was not that I did not appreciate the riches of the former mercies, but I could not rest satisfied. In some way I wanted Him more to my love. *I wanted Him to love me.* I wanted some manifestation of His love for me. I say this in all reverence. But I could not withhold myself from this longing. In all these movements I can do only as I am impelled. To try to remain or go forward other than I am led is a sheer impossibility. So I do not try. I let God act because I do not know these things. I do not know what is to be required of me the next instant.

There were a few times when I was moved to such yearning for Him, such a longing need of Him through every fibre of my being, that I felt at each instant *I should die if God did not uphold me.* I knew that this did not proceed from a lack of control. I knew it was the action of God. I say, in calm, quiet truthfulness, that I seemed to be

dying of love. I seemed to be desiring Him for all those He so loves and who desire Him not. I cannot explain this anguish. When it would pass I could no longer so desire. My soul just remained quiet and in a gentle peace. It seemed to my soul that this yearning had some power of purifying. It was as if the fire of love and desire swept and cleansed the entire being.

After each, I would return to my former prayer—the union, as I call it, that keeps my soul continuously in prayer, except when I sleep or speak to others. When I speak, the sense of this union is withdrawn, the sweetness flowing in my mouth ceases until the intercourse is over and I can return to prayer.

On one occasion when I was in prayer, *my soul in this union,* I was interrupted by some one who brought me a message giving occasion to what would have been, in former days, a cause of worry and a feeling of indignation. But by the grace of God, when the person had departed, I instantly put aside the worry and the hurt feelings. I did not want to interrupt my union in prayer. I just said to Our Lord, "I trust all these things to you. You have willed all. You will see to all." Instantly I went into prayer, and Our Lord, more sweetly than ever before, said "I am pleased with you!" In my joy and surprise I answered, "O dear Lord! It is all Your doing. You have given me

grace. I can do nothing of myself." Then *Our Lord turned and caught me suddenly to His embrace.* I can only remember the love and the joy as I was caught up to Him. I was panting and breathless with love. I do not know what more, or how long—I only felt that I was placed down gently as one would place a little child on a bed. Then a wonderful peace filled my soul and remained for hours—I cannot express this—I only know that I could not have borne this many times and live. How wonderful is His condescension! For how little does He reward us! If all souls knew the sweets of his love!

FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS

The day before the novena for the *Holy Name of Jesus* I was moved to utter a certain prayer. It seemed to my soul that it would express to Him the need, the longing I had of Him. I wanted Him to my love—that he would go away no more. I was moved to utter this prayer. The Holy Spirit seemed to impel me. I wanted to say it with all my soul, but fear of presuming withheld me. It had in it so much of the presumption of love. At last in the stillness of fear and love, I said to Him, "Kiss me with the kisses of Thy mouth, and make me Thine own Bride, forever." Then my soul waited. In the stillness He answered, *"The kisses of My Mouth are swords of pain, and My brides are*

formed in sorrow." Then in my soul I knew that I must pass through suffering if I would have Him to my love. All I could answer was, "Oh! My Lord! My Lord!" But I so wanted Him that I wanted anything that would make Him mine.

In the novena to the *Holy Name of Jesus* it seemed to me that He had truly begun to form me. I was deprived of everything. There seemed an absence of the realization of anything. I could just cling by faith to the thought, "He is!" Sometimes it was just the words I held to, the thought of His existence had gone. In the void I would repeat, "He is! He is!" When this utter absence would almost wear my soul out, for a few brief moments would come a sense of union to uphold me and again the void would close in on my soul. Through it all I was upheld by a realization that it was His Will. On the Feast I felt surely He would come. He had given me sorrow and pain in very truth. I waited in prayer the entire day. In the evening after Benediction I realized that He would not come. And I said, "O dear Lord! I am glad that today you did *Your* Will, not mine. Then deep in my soul *I heard the voice of God.* I realized it was not Our Lord, as sometimes before, *but God—The Three Persons.* My soul went down in adoration as He said, "What is it you desire of Me?" I could just answer, "Oh! My God! Do not let me presume!" Then He said,

"Have you not been told twice that you would know My voice?" And I remembered that in confession on two occasions it had been said to me, "You will know when God speaks to your soul." Then again as I adored: "What is it you desire of Me?" I would have answered, a few moments before, that I desired Jesus, that I wanted His love—but now I felt my soul held, and slowly as the words were being formed, I answered, "Whatsoever You would have me desire." Then again, more deeply in my soul, the question was repeated, and slowly, realizing that it was being formed for me, I answered, *"Thee and Thy Will!"* Then my soul was drawn into a wonderful sweetness of union. Later I knew that I had entered on the way that would *lead me to Him.* In deep calm and resignation I bowed to His Will. I seemed to have obtained that grace, a greater love for His Will.

COME, HOLY GHOST

The morning after the Feast of the Holy Name, there was a constant murmur in my soul, "Unless I go, the Paraclete will not come to you." I wondered at it. I did not understand. I could not see any connection between this word and the former working of God in my soul. Still the voice was insistent, and by degrees the knowledge dawned in my soul that He was warning me of

coming suffering, but that He would not proceed without my consent. Then I said to Him, "Dear Lord, Do Thy Will!" and my soul consented to whatsoever sorrow or suffering He would send. After this, I began to repeat constantly, *"Come, Holy Ghost! Come, Holy Spirit of Love!"* Later, I could just say *"Come!"* Slowly I realized that Our Lord had gone. I could not think of Him. I could not even utter His Name. I had never experienced such a dread, weary loss of Him. My soul seemed held down. Later, when my soul was wearied and spent beyond all words, I tried a few times to think towards Him, but my soul experienced such a weight of pain, such an inability to lift from under the weight of pain that would come, that I knew I should not try. I did not often do so; I just let the *Holy Spirit* act. He led me into the depths of such suffering that I know I could not have borne it unless God had given me *great* grace. I cannot describe those sufferings. I can hardly think of them now. I never knew a soul could suffer so much. I never knew such suffering existed. There were days of such intense anguish that I felt I should die of the very weight of pain, if God did not uphold me. I look back on that valley of darkness with a deep thankfulness to God that He led me through. When I think of other souls that must pass through this way, my soul is filled with pity. If I did not so trust God,

I would fear for them—I pray that he will *accept some of the suffering I endured* to obtain for them *strength and courage in their day of trial.*

FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART

This period lasted until the Feast of the *Sacred Heart* in June. Various faults and tendencies were shown to me, and I was questioned as to my willingness to have each uprooted. After each agreement there would follow hours, or days, or even a week of suffering under the action of the Holy Spirit. At first the graver tendencies were worked on, then the lesser. Before each purification my soul was shown the fault or the tendency, and how it might be an obstacle, and my consent was required. In some of the hours of suffering or of this weary wearing down of my soul, it seemed to me that *it was what Purgatory is to the Holy Souls.* At times, when the anguish seemed almost too great, there would arise in my soul this murmur, "Lie still under the Divine action." This was the only help that seemed held out to me. And it was given again and again, as I needed it; and my soul would be strengthened to endure.

MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION

After some weeks, though the purifications continued, my soul was drawn at times deeply into

contemplation, and the knowledge of some truths given me as never before.

My soul contemplated and adored the wonderful *mystery of the Incarnation.* I realized the preparation of the human race for that great mystery—the preparation of Mary—and more dimly, the preparation—if I may so speak—of the Body and Soul of Christ. I united with the *Silence of the Soul of Mary before,* and *at* the supreme moment of the Incarnation—I dwelt on these truths. I lived in them. In all the knowledge of them that was given to my soul—in union with Mary, I *worshipped the Holy Spirit* at the *moment of His union with her* at the Incarnation, offering this her worship as if it were mine, showing to Him again the beauty He found in Mary's soul at that great moment, offering to Him the joy He had found in His union with Mary.

In union with Mary I adored the Holy Spirit at the moment of the Incarnation, with the sweet *Body of Jesus Christ*—that Body, the special mark of the Holy Spirit in Mary, and because of His union with her.

In union with Mary I worshipped the Holy Spirit at the great moment, with the Soul of Jesus Christ, showing to Him again the *purity,* the *beauty, and the perfections of that Sacred Soul,* created in the tabernacle of Mary's being. I offered the worship as if it were mine, giving to

the Holy Spirit all the joy He had in that moment of union and of adoration.

In union with Mary I adored and loved the *Holy Spirit of Love,* with the *love in the Heart of Jesus* at the moment of the great mystery. I cannot express the wonder and the beauty of Mary's soul in these contemplations. Then slowly dawning was the thought of the Incarnation repeated, continued at every consecration of the Mass.

I was drawn to worship the *yearning waiting of the Son of God* for the moment of the Incarnation. His waiting from the everlasting; His waiting on Mary's consent; His *weary* waiting for the work of grace in souls; their participation in the Incarnation; His *fruitless* waiting for the thousands of lost souls; I seemed to live in the realization of these truths.

THE INCARNATION—THE MEANS OF GRACE FOR EACH SOUL.

It was shown to my soul how the *Incarnation* is the great means of grace for the human race—for each individual soul. It was shown to my soul that each increase of grace is an incoming of the Holy Spirit and a consequent making of the soul more one with Christ—hence a mystical Incarnation in that individual soul; forming Christ in us by grace. This knowledge was given me at various times, more and more clearly.

By degrees, my soul was made to understand how the body and soul *became one* with the Body and Soul of Christ. Through the *mystical Incarnation,* by *grace,* the movements, the tendencies of body and soul became *such as could be countenanced by Jesus Christ,* so actuated by grace and the Divine Will that no rebellion is possible.

With this understanding came the desire for the *mystical Incarnation by grace.* I was made to realize that it could be effected through suffering until all of self was destroyed in me. Then I would be one with my Beloved. I agreed to anything that might be necessary to unite me to Him.

THE ANNUNCIATION

On the *Feast of the Annunciation* I had a faint hope that perhaps that was the day when *Mary would become my Mother* as *He* had promised. As I asked for this mercy, my soul was made to realize that the forming of me *one* with Jesus through grace, would make me more Mary's child. I did not understand this perfectly. But I bowed to the Will of God.

After the Annunciation, the suffering deepened. A sense of the absence of Our Lord increased; it was a soul-weary *waiting* for Him. It seemed to me I could understand a little of the *"pain of loss."*

Later, at intervals for some hours, there was the constant prayer "Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ, give Thyself to me!" Again, *"Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ, cleanse me, purify me!"* After a time I would only murmur, "Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ!" I did not contemplate this. I just continually uttered it.

FIRST FRIDAY IN MAY

On the First Friday in May, after I had been tried in every way, interiorly and exteriorly, there was given to my soul a realization of the *Peace of the Soul of Christ,* the sweetness of that wondrous Peace. I remained for some time contemplating and adoring; and later praying—"Peace of the Soul of Christ give Thyself to me!"

About this time I began to realize the need I had of greater *faith, hope, and love.* My soul was drawn deeply into prayer and I contemplated the wonderful *faith of Mary*—especially, at the moment of the Incarnation—how her faith glorified God in her perfect acceptation of His word and His power.

Then the marvelous *hope of Mary* was shown me—her sublime trust and confidence; that, realizing the heights of sanctity required of her as *Mother of God,* she, a little maiden, in her lowliness trusted God absolutely.

I could only reverence the *love of Mary*. I united with it, and with her faith and hope. I was moved to believe with the faith of Mary, to hope with her hope, to love with her love. I thought this so beautiful and so pleasing, that I wished to offer this prayer continually. But in the succeeding days of trial I could not do so. For the novena for the Feast of the Sacred Heart, my whole soul was spent in the continuous cry—"Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ!"

After Benediction on the Feast itself, there was such a lifting of the burden, such a sense of sweetness that I seemed afraid to trust myself for fear it would vanish instantly. I thought it would cease in a few moments. But it continued to increase, swaying my soul, and filling me with such joy, such sweetness, that I could hardly bear it. I thought it must be that our Lord had returned. I had been always so in the nature of waiting for Him, that I had not left myself open to the real fact—but soon the whisper rose clear and distinct in my soul—*"Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"* My soul was made to know that the *Holy Spirit had come in some special way*. The sweetness of this union was so great, so deep, that almost all memory of my former sorrow and suffering was lost to me. It was greater far in its sweetness than was the time of trial in its pain.

I continued in this union, just uttering again and again—*"Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ!"* At times, at this prayer, the sweetness would so increase that I could hardly bear it. Then by degrees came a growing realization of the *Peace of the Soul of Christ* and a quiet praying, *"Peace of the Soul of Christ, give Thyself to me!"*

This state of union and sweetness continued until the time of retreat in July. I worshipped the Peace in the Soul of Christ. I united with it, tasting its sweetness, realizing the wondrous beauty of that Peace.

THE HOLY SPIRIT—HER DIRECTOR

Retreat, July, 1909—I was not able to attend the instructions or meditations of the retreat, as they were given over in the auditorium, and so I remained away and let the Holy Spirit be my Director. I had asked that I might make this retreat for the intention most pleasing to God. I received no answer, but I was moved to make it for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

The first day, I continued in the sweetness of union, realizing more and more clearly with each succeeding hour the Peace of the Soul of Christ. Towards evening my soul was drawn more deeply into prayer, and it was shown me that, as an end

of this retreat, I would receive grace—grace in some very high and special sense. As it was shown to my soul, it seemed a grace that would make me "find favor in His sight": a graciousness of beauty, a grace of loveliness, that would make me pleasing to Him. I believed and adored.

Then for the next few days my soul was drawn more deeply into the contemplation of the Peace of the Soul of Christ. I was filled with sweetness of that holy peace. I lived in a continuous union. More of the wondrous beauty of that Peace was shown to my soul—its calmness in the midst of trials, of sins, of the needs of His creatures. My soul gazed in adoration on the Peace of His Sacred Soul.

CHRIST, THE PEACE-MAKER

My soul understood, or rather saw that that *Peace* is in perfect harmony with His *Omniscience,* His *Justice,* His *Love;* that seeing all things on the side of God and on the side of man; weighing all things in the perfect balance of His justice and loving both with infinite love, Peace remains perfect and untroubled. As my soul advanced in the contemplation and adoration of that Peace, it was shown to my soul that the Peace in the Soul of Christ is the peace between God and man. It is more than a possessing of His Soul in *calmness in*

the midst of all events. It is the Peace that stands before the Face of God, the Peace that draws favor for man, the Peace that gives ineffable worship to God for mankind. It was also shown how Christ is the great Peacemaker between God and man—"The chastisement of our peace is upon Him"—how 'God hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all'—'making peace through the blood of His Son.' Then it was shown me that He would give me to share in His office as Peacemaker by union with Him, that I might plead more efficaciously for souls. I understood in a new sense the meaning of the beatitude, "Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Peacemakers as Christ, our elder Brother, is the great Peacemaker, when we become so united with Him that we share in His work, His mission, and are called, adopted as children of God—"sons, and if sons, heirs and co-heirs with Christ Jesus." I had a faint idea that this was the *grace* that was promised me at the beginning of retreat.

Later it was shown me that this was the grace the Holy Spirit had been preparing me for since the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, the chastening, the purification, that I might be made clean, clean of heart to see God.

Gradually the contemplation of the Peace of the Soul of Christ was withdrawn, and I was

moved to pray for a union that would transform me. When I am impelled to pray for any favor, I know it is the spirit of God moving me, and I cannot withhold myself. There is nothing else to do. Everything else is withdrawn.

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF GRACE

It was shown to my soul how the Purity of the Soul and Body of Christ would interpenetrate, transform me in this closer union. My soul pleaded, and the question was asked, "Do you believe in the transforming power of grace?" I could only answer, "I believe, my God! give me grace." Then my soul realized the work of grace, its power in souls, its transforming power. Again it was shown me how any good act or desire brings an increase of grace, consequently a closer indwelling of the Holy Ghost and a forming of the soul more one with Christ.

The beauty and the power of grace were more and more unfolded to my soul.

These realizations of truths just appear in my soul. I do not start to think, or reason about them. They are in my soul as if they had always been there. They are presented to my soul's gaze. I do not hear any words of explanation. I just see the truth, as much of it unfolded as the Holy Spirit wishes. I do not think at the time, of course,

about seeing or hearing. I just receive the truth, clear and distinct in my soul.

Gradually I began to realize the need of greater faith, hope and charity, before my soul could advance. Again was shown to me the beautiful faith and hope of Mary. I realized the existence of her charity, but I could not contemplate anything connected with it. I just reverenced it and adored God. When I prayed, "I believe with the faith, I hope with the hope of Mary," I was stopped from the rest of that utterance, with just a movement of my soul toward it. I was not ready.

LIKE UNTO MARY

When contemplating *Mary's faith and hope,* and reverencing her love, I was drawn to ask that *I might be made like her,* a faint, tiny miniature of my beautiful Mother. I could then find favor in His eyes. In all reverence to the Saints, I asked that I might not reflect any one of them, but my sweet Mother Mary. My soul was drawn deeply into prayer and it was shown me that this would entail intense suffering. I was shown that *Mary suffered in her soul* the *agonies of Jesus.* Her oneness, her union with Jesus was so perfect that *His* sufferings were *hers.* I was asked if I would be willing for suffering similar to this. My soul agreed. I wanted to be like Mary. Then for three hours, my soul was plunged in such darkness, such

a fear at the realization of coming suffering, that death would have seemed a release. I had never so suffered before. I can never explain the fear, the dread that bore down my soul. It seemed as if I could not face the anguish in store for me, yet God gave me grace to hold fast to Him. I do not think words would describe this anguish. When this passed, I was worn and tired, but quietly and firmly I still desired to be made like unto Mary. Later it was shown me that I must be made like unto her in *faith, hope* and *charity,* before the day of union.

The next day the work began, though I did not realize it until night. I seemed deprived of everything, every realization of truth. My soul seemed, as it were, suspended, just clinging to God by faith. This suffering was very great. It was of a different nature, seemingly, from other sufferings that I had experienced, yet I knew it was similar. In the evening it was shown to my soul that faith had been tried, and the comfort given that I had advanced a little. The next day I was borne down by a terrible weight. I could not understand. I cannot explain this suffering. At the close of the day, when my soul was worn and spent, it lifted up from under the weight and cried, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Then I was shown that I had been tried in hope, and that I had advanced in that virtue.

The retreat ended and I was left with the impression in my soul that the grace promised was being bestowed, not in its fullness, but in the degree that I had entered on the way leading to this union.

THE WILL OF GOD

August-October, 1909. The day after the retreat there was a continuous breathing in my soul, "Unless I go, the Paraclete will not come." I knew Our Lord was whispering this, but I kept putting it aside. I was partly afraid of what was to come. I think my soul was a little tired. It was so recently that He had given me a sense of His *Purity* and the *Peace of His Soul,* though not of the fullness of His *personality,* after the period of trial. Then it was shown to my soul that in His sweet graciousness, He would not proceed without my consent. Instantly I cried, "O my Lord! do Thy Will to the utmost."

The days following I was bruised and tried and worn under the action of the Holy Spirit. On the eve of the Feast of *Our Lady of the Snows,* it was shown to my soul that I had been advanced in faith and hope by the trial of the previous days. Then while I was deep in prayer, it was shown to me that the year before I had made a novena of the retreat in honor of Our Blessed Mother to obtain the gift of some higher purity. I did not

then understand why I had made that intention. I was moved to it, and I just followed the inspiration. Without my adverting to it, the novena ended on the Feast of *Our Lady of the Snows*. I was impelled to make a second for the same intention to end on the feast of the *Assumption*. I was not satisfied. I was impelled to make a third for the same purpose. This last ended without my having previously thought of it on the feast of the *Most Pure Heart of Mary*. Then I rested. I had no more desire. All this was recalled to me. Yet I can hardly say recalled. In these things there does not seem to be any exercise of memory. The whole is presented to my gaze. I see it all in a clear light in my soul. That is why I have used that peculiar, almost childish expression, "shown back." It seems more nearly to express my meaning. It was shown in my soul that the purity I had then asked was to be given me, that I must be *clothed in the purity of Mary* before I could advance to receive the *Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ,* as had been previously promised. I could not understand the full meaning of these things. But I believed.

THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION

In the novena to Our Lady *before the feast of the Assumption,* I was constantly made aware that the suffering I was enduring was the action of the Holy Spirit to make me like to our sweet Mother

in *faith* and *hope*. The realization of the absence of Our Lord became so pronounced that at every instant it seemed I could not bear the Divine action one second longer. I wanted Him with every fibre of my soul and body. I could have died of the hunger and longing for Him. The realization of His absence was deeper than ever before. On the eve of the Assumption, when my soul was worn to the utmost, I turned suddenly to Our Lady and cried, "O Mother, I want Him with your heart!" I realized that this was the prayer to which the Holy Spirit had worked in the past days. Quietly and gently the burden lifted. The *anguish* of his absence was removed. I knew He had not come; but in some way my soul seemed strengthened. I seemed to be *united with the Most Pure Heart of Mary*. In my soul, I realized the sweet, calm *depths* of that most pure Heart. I was made to realize that it was so united with me that I might say it was given to me. In my soul there was this continuous breathing, "With the Most Pure Heart of Mary!" Every act, every thought, every movement was offered with the Most Pure Heart of Mary. I find it difficult to explain this union. My soul lived in it. Even through the sufferings that came after, there was always the consciousness that I was bearing them, offering them with the most Pure Heart of Mary, as if that Heart were mine, that I might be pre-

pared for that higher, closer union with Our Lord as had been promised—that union wherein His Purity would transform me.

OF THE MOST PURE HEART OF MARY

During the first two days of my novena in honor of the *Most Pure Heart of Mary,* preparatory to the feast, my soul experienced a strong sweet sense of union and the constant jetting up of the prayer, "Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ!" Then the peculiar sweetness ceased, and in my soul I was conscious of the working of the Holy Spirit as I was drawn deeply into suffering. Again I was tried and exercised in faith. I find it hard to express the suffering of the trials in faith. There seemed present to me nothing but a clinging to the bare truth, to the word of God. In this void of reality my soul was plunged for hours at a time. Now and then I would cry, "I believe, my God! I believe." These sufferings were terrible, and so deeply *in* the soul that I cannot describe them. At the end of these trials it was shown to my soul that I had advanced in faith; that these trials had been for that purpose. This was a great comfort to me, as it was one of the parts of these sufferings, that during their continuance I did not know the nature or purpose of the suffering. Then was given to my soul a realization of some

truths—God's relations to the soul, as Creator, as Redeemer, as Sanctifier.

"THOUGH HE SLAY ME, YET WILL I TRUST IN HIM"

The next day there was a withdrawal of everything except the impression of the impossibility of my being united to God. I could not remember His past mercies. I realized the need of His help, yet I seemed unable to obtain it. God was kind enough to give me a dim knowledge of the nature of these trials from their similarity to former ones; otherwise I might have failed Him. I knew dimly, without any comfort from the knowledge, that I was being tried and exercised in hope. When my utter sinfulness and unworthiness were borne in on my soul, so that I could not dare to think of union with Him, I cried, "Let me do Thy Will—that is all!" "Let me do Thy Will!" At the very end, when my soul was in the depths of its anguish, I cried, *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."* The burden lifted, and a great, quiet trust came in my soul. I was shown that I had been advanced in hope, and I was drawn more deeply into union. Then there was shown back to me a scene that I had not thought of in years, in fact that I had hardly reverted to at any time. I did not think or remember. I do not

think I could have done either. I just gazed. I saw in my soul—on the morning when I was making my *first vows*—the moment of reception of Holy Communion—I was made aware in my soul, how the choir sang, at the moment of our going to the altar to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion, *"Who shall ascend unto the mountain of the Lord?" "Quis ascendet?"* At that time, I did not know what they sang; I was absorbed in love for Our Lord. But the next day some one did remark how beautiful was the connection. I realized that God must have made that Sister make the remark, so that later when He would use the scene, I could more easily believe. In my soul, in deep comfort, I was *made to realize how God had encompassed my life,* that everything had been for a purpose and all of one plan, that from the beginning He had destined me and had made all things conduce to His Will. I am expressing this poorly, but it was beautiful and clear to me.

This sweet condescension was given to me after my trial in *hope* wherein it had seemed that I could never dare presume to *think* of union with Him. In this, He had given the answer. In His tender mercy He had destined me all along for union with Him. He was still working out the plan. I accepted this assurance in all humility and love.

THE DOLORS OF MARY

On the Feast of the *Most Pure Heart of Mary* it was shown to my soul that I was entering on the way of *love.* I had been advanced in *faith* and *hope;* and now, in union with the most Pure Heart of Mary, I would go forward in *charity.* I was drawn into deep, sweet union, and the Holy Spirit showed me that He would unite with me in honor of His unions with Mary, especially in the *Immaculate Conception,* the *Incarnation;* the *Dolors,* particularly the *Passion,* the *Pentecostal Descent; Her Communions, Her Assumption.* Because of His wonderful unions with Mary He would unite with me. As an end of His unions with me, Jesus would be given me—I did not understand how this would be accomplished. I just gave myself to the Divine Action. My soul was filled with a strong, sweet sense of great union.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The next day He began His work, though I did not know it till evening. There was a quiet sense of union, making me realize the Holy Spirit. There was not the former sweetness. I was made to suffer lightly. At the close of the day He showed me the purpose of that day's work, that He was uniting with me in *honor of His union*

with Mary in the Immaculate Conception, and that there would be a day for each of these special unions. Through these days the suffering was light and bearable. I was conscious of the Holy Spirit.

FIRST DOLOR, OR SORROW, OF MARY.

There was a great sense of fear, of dread, through some four or five days, and the thought in my soul, "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce." Not understanding, just holding *myself ready before* His Will. Then shown that the Holy Spirit would unite with me in honor of His union with Mary in her dolors. Shown how that had been intimated, then worked for a day, then for the space of a novena, and now to be realized. Then, later, shown how the other unions in honor of His unions with Mary in the Incarnation had been brought to a state or condition and would go on till the end of my life.

That union—the workings since Christmas all show clearly. The mystical Incarnation to continue during life. Then another time, shown how the union had been accomplished by grace in honor of His union with Mary in the Immaculate Conception.

All the working through my sickness, my waiting, and then *His coming* in that novena after the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, when this

union brought to a certain state was to go on till death; the forming me in grace.

All this was very clear. I was shown that the unions, the working that had been intimated in those previous condescensions, had not been passing mercies, but a something to be carried out through my life. Nothing was useless or void. The decision—would I be willing to have this union in honor of Mary's dolors brought to a certain state—to go on till the end of life.

FIRST DOLOR, OFFERING IN THE TEMPLE

Again the breathing in my soul, "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce." Then in great union shown how Mary, in that offering of Our Lord in the Temple, had participated in His office as victim; and the sword to pierce her soul was her acceptance of the trial; that she could not enjoy or realize the bliss of Our Lord's presence except when the Holy Spirit gave her to realize it. I am saying this poorly—almost afraid to write it. It may seem so strange. But it was shown me and the grace *"Out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."* Mary was made a power over souls. Her sharing in the redemption. Then shown its application to me. "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce," that the Holy Spirit would, in honor of His union with Mary in that special dolor, de-

prive me of the sense of the presence of Jesus. And as a result, out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed, *great power given me to cause souls* to open their thoughts, *their needs to me,* that God might thereby bestow *grace and help on them.* This shown at different times. The work carried out: *This suffering for souls*—absence of Our Lord's presence, sense of union, of the working of the Holy Spirit at the same time.

OUR LADY OF SORROWS

Sense of the Presence of the Adorable Trinity is present within me. Wondrous joy and reverence. Withdrawal after two hours. Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows—Suffering. In the evening, a realization that the grace had been once more given me—that "out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."

DAY AFTER FEAST AT COMMUNION

Worship with the Heart of Jesus. At Mass shown back what I could not recall all these past months since October last. I had made a novena worshipping the Adorable Trinity with the most pure heart of Mary, as present within her. Then I was moved to worship the Adorable Trinity as present within me. The instant I had formed the intention everything was blotted out. I could not

recall what I had prayed for, or what was the previous movement. My soul seemed held dumb. Then that breathing. "Blessed are they who suffer persecution," insistent in my soul, and the next day my illness. I could never remember what I had done. I tried once or twice since my recovery, but a perfect blank. During the sickness I could not have the comfort of living in that union. I know that I had made some intention, but I knew, too, that I was stopped. I felt that I had not gone ahead of grace, that the impulsion was of God, yet I could not think back, so I let things go. Now, nearly a year after, the whole is made clear to me, and shown that all this time was necessary to make that a reality. The worship of the Holy Trinity as present within me. Now I may do so also with the *Silence of the Soul of Mary*.

What that little thought is—"Worship with the Heart of Jesus!" I reverently put aside and wait. I must not presume.

"Who shall ascend unto the mountain of the Lord?" "The innocent of hand and clean of heart." Constant breathing in my soul. "Who is she that cometh up from the desert leaning on her Beloved?" I am shown the meaning of this. "Blessed are the clean of heart." Clean of self, of desires, of fears, "for they shall see God" in everything, in every circumstance.

Impression that the working of the Holy Spirit in the First Dolor is brought to a state, and will continue, but that I may be entering on Second Dolor. Sense of fear, of depression. I am perfectly willing, nay glad, to unite in any suffering; yet the fear of what may come is beginning.

Then the presence of the Adorable Trinity in my soul produces great joy, bliss, and reverence.

Contemplation of the purity of the Body and Soul of Jesus for some hours. Next morning, after Mass, realizing as never before the *Presence of Jesus in my soul. The joy worth all the months of deprivation.*

Then after two hours, Sense of the *purity of the Body and Soul of Christ in my soul.* Contemplating it, offering it for souls, and to the worship of God. Realizing that the Holy Spirit had united with me in the Incarnation by grace, by this special gift, the purity of the Body and Soul of Christ. That all this praying, this offering of it in my soul was bringing Jesus by the action of grace more and more into oneness with my soul. Content then to unite with Him in that work.

Again, at Communion—"Worship with the Heart of Jesus." Constant realization of the purity of the Body and Soul of Christ filling my soul, giving me joy and union, offering it constantly, living in it.

For some months past the kind of prayer has been changing. There are seldom thoughts or the heretofore constant jetting up of prayers. There is just a drawing down of my soul. A staying without words or thoughts of prayer, just deepening, deepening union. I find this hard to express.

FIRST DOLOR—MARY'S PERFECT OBEDIENCE.

Shown to me that in honor of the exterior part of Mary's dolor, her going up to be purified, utter absence of *human* respect, that I would suffer. I agreed, yet my soul feared and dreaded. The suffering is so opposed to my nature; but I saw that it was the best means of casting out human respect.

In this (First Dolor) there are two parts: Mary's perfect obedience to the Holy Spirit in her purification, in her absence of human respect; and her offering of Jesus as Victim.

Shown to me that no matter how seemingly absent the Lord was from me, He was by that very privation uniting with me in honor of His union with Mary in her dolors.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

I surely have gone into Egypt. I had thought it would be work or intercourse with others that

would deprive me for a time of the sweetness of contemplation. It began this way: I was made to be much with others. Until now He has not needed "the noise of words" to allow Him to do His work. That would have given distraction truly, that might carry with it a slight rest to nature—the interest of meeting souls—but there have been distractions that have had for their end my seeing some fault or some tendency and my acknowledging it. There has been no possibility of ridding myself of these distractions. At the end of each set, I would see how it was under the action of the Holy Spirit. I have had just enough sense of union to keep me in a state of prayer without ability to form one spiritual or mental act. I was just held.

First Friday, Forty Hours, all alike. Once or twice I was able to half form the thought, *"Though He slay me."* Last evening I was able to say, "Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ, I offer Thee." Since then, at intervals I can utter that prayer, so the void is not so wearing as before. To-day there seems at times the dawning of some closer union. Then it goes—I do not know—maybe I am to have a little respite and then—farther into the desert. "Though I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." I see now what has been my almost continuous state before, even during times of purification. Union, contemplation, light, sweetness in

degrees. If proof were needed, it also proves to me we can do nothing of ourselves.

Sept. 30th. Action of the Holy Spirit working out of my soul all desires. Union of the will with God's will—with the silence of the Soul of Mary.

Oct. 1st. Sweetness of the presence and working of the Holy Spirit. Constant attitude of soul, "With the silence of the Soul of Mary." Towards evening, overpowering sweetness and the realization of a fuller indwelling of the Holy Spirit of Love. Fuller understanding of Mary's action in the purification. My fear that I might give bad example answered by Mary's action. . . .

Oct. 5th. Realization and acceptance of the trial in all its phases. Accepting the humiliation, the constant rising of prayer in my soul. With the Silence of the Soul of Mary. At eleven, the prayer, "Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ, I offer Thee." Constant prayer in my soul, and the question, "Who shall ascend unto the mountain of the Lord?" Then later, the understanding that the *silence* of the Soul of Mary was more and more given me and that it brought the gift of the purity of the Body and Soul of Christ. Then later it was shown me that as He had promised to give me of His purity that I might offer it, so it was done. His fuller gift of purity, that I might offer *it to the glory of God,* and the *salvation of souls,*

was especially given after the Feast of Our Lady of Dolors.

WHO SHALL ASCEND?

Continual question with great sweetness in my soul, *"Who shall ascend unto the mountain of the Lord?"* Frequent breathings. "I shall make thee to dwell in my Holy Tabernacle. Thou shalt not go out from thence." Each time a sinking down of my being in humility, and the utterance, "Who am I, my Lord and my God?" A clear understanding and application of "Who is she that cometh up from the desert leaning on her Beloved?"

All these gracious mercies are indications of what He is going to do with my soul because of His Promise.

Oct. 6th. Working out of desires and fears. I must not desire to be in His presence if He wills me away. I must not fear that I have failed Him in some form of prayer. "The *Lord ruleth me,* I shall want for nothing." No desire of any manifestations of His mercy other than He gives. His Will, the sole motive, the sole rule, the sole desire. He will manifest it in His own way. "I shall fear no evil, for Thou art *with me.*"

Feast of the Purity of Mary. Had thought that I would obtain great graces from our sweet Mother on that day. At the close of day I was

glad that God had done His Will, and that my will had not in any way been followed. The assurance, "He that offends not by the tongue is a perfect man," again and again; and later, "For the grace of thy lips." Then the realization that the gift of prudence in speech, of wisdom in my words was to be given me to fit me for *the work for souls.*

LOSS OF JESUS

Next day lost Mass and Holy Communion without fault. The Lord's Will, the only reason. Grieved to the very depths of my soul. At first, in my not understanding, I fear there was the cry from my heart, "Oh why?" I hope there was no rebellion in my tears and in the sorrow of my heart. I was held from saying a word that might bring blame on anyone. Then later, I suppose because He had gone in that manner, the Paraclete came in a wonderful way.

THE SLAYING OF THE INNOCENTS

In connection with the Second Dolor I had understood that as Mary went into Egypt without saying a word of the impending danger to the neighboring mothers, and consequently may perhaps have incurred their displeasure, because of the suffering of the Holy Innocents, and the sorrow

of their mothers—in some such way, I was to be the means of sorrow to some, but I did not then understand.

Towards the end of the union of this dolor has been arising the prayer, "Give me wisdom in speaking." A realization that lately I have not had even my former faculty of speaking with fruit of God, or even of saying the correct thing at times. I felt that I was being directed, that later I might receive in greater measure. All this dimly. After the prayer "Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ, I offer Thee," had again come to my consciousness, the sweetness had been continuing to increase.I understood that this was the entrance to the Third Dolor. I understood also all in connection with the Second Dolor. There had been a trial for me. Then because of the suffering of that Second Dolor, the Holy Spirit would give me grace in speaking. Because of the trial that came through speaking, I was to obtain grace in speaking. Is not God wonderful? All this is in keeping. Because of my suffering in Second Dolor, was my intercourse with others a gift to be given me for the works of God. How all things work together unto His purpose! I see now how one Dolor overlaps the other. I know I have not fully obtained the gift, nor have I finished the suffering relative to it that must come to me. More will be said and thought: but He will give me grace.

JESUS AMONG THE DOCTORS

It has been shown that this trial will be coming. Mary found Him among the Doctors. Am I to suffer my trial to be made fitted to speak as I should to certain souls? My inner suffering—the absence of Him, as I have not yet known. Is it not to be a sacrifice preparing my soul and theirs for what will be given me to do? How one dolor works into the other, and all tending to the same purpose! How He fits all things to His purpose!

ONE WITH CHRIST

The day of His union with me in honor of His union with Mary in the Incarnation, it was more clearly shown to my soul that any action which increased grace in the soul, uniting it more to the Holy Spirit, made the soul thereby more one with Christ Jesus. Thus the Incarnation was being accomplished in that soul. This could be continuous, and so glorify God.

On the day when the *Holy Spirit united with my soul in honor* of His wondrous *union with Mary in her Communion,* it was again shown me that when He would come to me in His fullness, then Jesus would be one with me, and the Father would abide with me because of the Son and the Holy Ghost. I was moved to ask for this in union. I was given a clearer understanding of the mean-

ing contained in the words, *"If any man love Me"*—purely, perfectly love, implying the presence and action of the Holy Spirit—"the Father will love him, and We"—*the Three Adorable Persons*—"*will come* and make our abode with him." I also understood with new light the message in these words: "If any man love Me, he will keep My word—"*Love* was in the keeping of His *word*, the perfect doing of His *Will*.

By degrees I began to realize the need of *charity*. I pleaded that it might be given me in its fulness. . . .

UNION WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

At the close of these six days of special unions, my soul was filled with the sweetness of union with the Spirit of Love. I was moved to give my *soul and body to the Holy Spirit as if they were the body and soul of Mary*, that in them He might work His Will and unite them to Himself. It was made clear to my soul that He would do so in the novena I would then begin before the Feast of Mary's Nativity. I knew there was some connection in this coincidence of the novena's coming right after the six days of special unions, but I could not see it clearly.

During this novena I was aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a sense of continuous union without the sweetness, except at times. He showed

me the presence of self-love in my soul. In gentle suffering and in trials along the line of those faults, or tendencies of self-love, He worked to remove the roots. I was drawn to plead that He would do so at any cost, as the obstacle was made so manifest to my soul.

MARY'S NATIVITY

On the *Feast of Mary's Nativity* there was at first just a sense of quiet union. Then after some hours of deep suffering, it was shown to my soul that I had been advanced towards that higher union by the previous days of gentle suffering. I was drawn to worship the Three Persons of the Adorable Trinity in union with Mary. In the light in my soul I realized some truths as I had never done before. The gift of being—existence. How sin is opposed to God. Thoughts about the creation of man. "Let us make man to *Our* image and likeness." Then gradually a realization of the evil of self-love, its opposition to God.

In the three days following before the *Feast of the Holy Name of Mary* my soul was filled with a sense of strong, sweet union. In the midst of it I was held, and impelled to pray for a soul. I tried at first to put this impulse aside, as I did not wish to interrupt the working of the Holy Spirit, as I then thought. It was shown me that this movement was given me as in other cases. The

impulsion was from God. I agreed and gave myself up to praying for this soul—just a holding of the soul before God in my union with Him. This is the only way I can pray for souls. I am drawn into union and I hold them as it were before God, without interruption of my union.

The sweet sense of union with the Holy Spirit continued, as I continued to plead that He would uproot self-love. Then I realized more clearly in my soul how God is working with the being, the intellect, the will of man. The soul constantly formed to the image of God—the continuous act of creation. It was not that I thought of these truths. I could not interrupt the Divine action; but in my soul I saw them with new light, and more of the truth was unfolded to my soul's perception.

On the *vigil of the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary,* my soul was filled with a sense of strong, sweet union with the Holy Spirit, increasing with the hours. Then by degrees I was made to realize that He was uniting with soul and body, making them more like to the soul and body of Mary, more one with the Soul and Body of Jesus. I realized the worship to be given to God by the soul and body. I was made to understand that in union with Jesus, He would use my body to make reparation for the sins of the world in the body and the senses. As Christ uses His Adorable Body

in the Holy Eucharist to win souls to Him, so by union with Him, and with the Spirit of Love, He would use my body. I say this in all reverence, but it was sweetly manifested to me. As Mary's body showed forth the beauty of purity, so, in some manner, would He use my body to win souls to Him. I was moved to ask for these favors in deep union, realizing the Divine Action on soul and body.

HOLY NAME OF MARY

On the *Feast of the Holy Name of Mary,* after the first few hours of deep sweet union with the Holy Spirit, my soul was gradually drawn down into deep suffering. I was made to realize that I must be willing to give up the kind of loving and longing I had for Jesus, willing to have that love changed—spiritualized—if God so willed. It was presented to me that as Mary was willing to give up Jesus, so must I be willing to sacrifice the kind of loving and longing I had for Jesus, according to the Divine Will. This was the greatest sacrifice yet asked of me. The anguish of it seemed to reach to the very depths of my being. One point that seemed to hurt my love was the fact that I had never told Him that I was going to give Him up so. If I could only realize Him once to tell Him that I was giving Him up because of the

Will of God. This may seem childish, but it was very vivid to me.

I continued in this suffering and trial, and the meaning of the words, "How is it that you sought Me?" was more and more unfolded to my soul. I must not seek Him if He desired to remove Himself. He was in everything, and I must take Him as He gave Himself. To realize this and to submit cost me more than any previous form of suffering, yet I think from the first, He gave me grace to submit to His Will.

The next day the absence of Our Lord was more marked than ever in a dulled, wearied sense. I accepted it as the working out of my sacrifice. I did not understand; I just waited on His Will and suffered. The suffering deepened and increased under the consciousness of the action of the Holy Spirit.

Later, the rest of the words of Jesus came with new meaning, "Did you not know I am, I must be, in the things that are my Father's?" The realization came gradually to my soul that I would find Him in exterior work or in anything that was according to His Will. Then came the realization that I must be willing to leave my life of prayer if He so willed—that I would find Him even in the most distracting exterior occupation, if such were His Will. I agreed to all this in the midst of my deep suffering.

SECOND DOLOR

Then it was clearly shown in my soul that on the preceding day and on this, the *Holy Spirit was uniting with me in honor* of His union with *Mary in her dolors*. He was making me a tiny bit like my sweet Mother in her sorrows. It was also shown how my first day's sacrifice, of being willing to give up the kind of loving and longing I have for Jesus, was in union with her offering of Him as Victim to the Lord in the temple. Had I seen this on that day, perhaps it might have made my sacrifice a little less hard. It was manifest to me that my trial of being willing to give up my life of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, if God so willed, to seek and find Him in exterior works, was in union with *Mary's sorrow in the flight and sojourn in Egypt*. Before all this was manifested to me, I had not seen whither the suffering of these previous days had been tending. I had formed the intention of offering the days from the preceding Friday before the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, as a novena to Our Lady of Sorrows. This is the only way in which I can make a novena. I form, or half-form, the intention of offering the days. Then I continue in whatever way the Holy Spirit is leading. As the days before the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary had been so filled with sweetness, I had concluded that I

was to proceed along the line of union with Him in His workings in my soul. Then I had formed the intention of offering the seven days before the Feast to Our Lady of Sorrows. Though I had united with her in the suffering of those days, I did not know till it was shown to me, that the Spirit of Love was uniting with me because of His marvelous union with Mary in her dolors. The Holy Spirit showed me that He would continue to work out His plan. I understood that this meant further suffering, but I bowed to His Will.

The next day, the Feast of the *Exaltation of the Holy Cross*, I prepared myself to receive some form of suffering in honor of Our Lady's third dolor. For some time past, there had been just a deepening sense of union with the Holy Spirit and merely the knowledge by faith of Our Lord's Presence when I received Holy Communion. The meaning of this dolor was disclosed at my Communion; there was a deeper sense of union with the Holy Spirit, and more of a quiet realization that it was by *faith* alone that I acknowledged Our Lord's Presence.

THIRD DOLOR

After some hours of *quiet union with the Holy Spirit*, I was given a clearer understanding of the meaning in Our Lord's words, "How is it that you *sought* Me?" In these three days, the whole

scene of the Finding in the Temple was dimly shown to my soul. I knew there was some deeper meaning in the word to Mary. I understood it was not a reproach as to a natural Mother. As such she would have to seek her child. There was something deeper. I was not shown it. I just realized that much; I was made to realize the application of the words to *me*. I must not seek Him otherwise than in the manner He willed. By degrees, it was manifested to me that I must be willing to give Him up as to the strong personal loving I had for Him in the Blessed Sacrament. In the light that was given to my soul I saw that deep down I had been keeping almost unconsciously a certain watchfulness, awaiting until all the action of the Holy Spirit had passed. Then my whole soul would fall prostrate before my Beloved in the Holy Eucharist and love Him to my heart's content, and satisfy my heart for all its privation. I was not conscious of this until it was searched from the depths. I acknowledged, and agreed to His Will. I saw that I must love Him in the way He willed, with a love that would be a worship of God. I was made to realize more deeply His Divinity. His Oneness with the Father and the Holy Spirit. More clearly and deeply I was shown that I must give Him love that *is* love, not the sweet act of loving, not any comfort to self, but a love that would glorify Him as God—

that I must love Him with a love like unto the love of Mary. Dimly I began to realize that this love was the perfect doing of His Will, or rather the perfect union of my will with His. I understood that this sacrifice was to be in union with Mary's sacrifice of Him, her perfect and complete surrender of her will to the Divine Will—in her absolute realization that though He was her Son, He was her God. I knew that there was more that was not yet shown me. But I bowed my heart to His Will. I suffered my sacrifice with the Most Pure Heart of Mary.

The day following in the commemoration of the *Fourth Dolor,* there was just quiet union with the Holy Spirit. By degrees, I was moved to pray for souls, especially two. In the test that was given me, it seemed that this might be a turning on another path, or a pause in the action of the Holy Spirit on my soul. I was tested as to my willingness to pray thus for souls even at *that* cost, if such were the Divine Will. I agreed to His Will instantly, and gave myself to strong praying for those souls in deep union; and the *scene in the Fourth Dolor was presented* to my gaze. It was all in my soul, and it was dimly presented, so I find it hard to express myself. It was as if my soul beheld Mary at the time when Jesus was on the way to Calvary. It seemed to me that she was upholding Mary Magdalen and St. John by her

strength of soul, giving to them courage and fortitude. It was as if she were not allowing herself to dwell on the sufferings of Jesus, or even turning toward them. But the wonderful sacrifice was obtaining grace and strength for souls, especially those two.

It was as if my soul saw and knew these things. Then I was made to realize that Mary's love was in sacrifice and that *my* love, to be like hers, must be in the same. I knew that like Mary's, the sacrifice would be for souls. I did not understand in what way. I just agreed to the Will of God.

Throughout the remaining days of the Holy Spirit's union with me in honor of His union with Mary in her dolors, there was just a sense of the union with Him, and a deeper consciousness of my non-realization of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. There was a clearer understanding of Mary's love for us and of her union with the Will of God as measured by her sacrifice. *To give up Jesus—and for us!* I was permitted to realize that love was growing in me—the love that He desired—in my fuller acceptation of the Divine Will in any form of suffering or privation. There was a greater willingness to receive my suffering for souls.

OUR LADY OF SORROWS

On the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, I was at first tested by the spiritual nature of all these

movements. My soul was wearied, yet I was willing to endure this weariness as long as God willed.

HIS UNION WITH MARY IN THE PENTECOSTAL DESCENT

Then my soul was filled with a sense of strong, sweet union, swaying it to its depths. I realized the special *in-coming of the Holy Spirit* as I had never done before. *His Presence seemed to fill my soul,* as I had never before experienced. I was inundated with joy and lightness and sweetness. With this fuller realization of His sweet presence, was given a deep content in it. The love and waiting for Our Lord seemed to have more of an acquiescence to the Divine Will. My soul was made to understand that the Holy Spirit was uniting with it in honor of His union with *Mary in the Pentecostal Descent.* I began a novena in that honor, though I held my soul waiting for further light. I was a little hesitant to proceed along any way until I was shown clearly that it was of God. Perhaps I was wanting in full faith. The next day, it was shown clearly to my soul that the Holy Spirit was uniting as He had manifested before. I was shown how the trials of the previous days had prepared me for this union. He also showed me that He had been following out His plan, that in the days before the *Feast of the Nativity*

of Mary, He had united with me in honor of His wondrous union with Mary in the Immaculate Conception. In the three days between that feast and the Holy Name of Mary, He had been uniting with me in honor of His union with Mary in the Incarnation. In the seven days just passed, He had been uniting with me in honor of His union with Mary in her Dolors.

I realized that He would continue His work according to the plan He had first shown me. I believed and adored and gave myself up to His action. That which had seemed to dim my understanding and acceptation of His course, was that I had not seen the place in His plan for the union in honor of the Incarnation. I knew the other unions were being effected, but I did not see the continuation of the plan. So in His sweet condescension he would not let me proceed without a clear understanding of His course.

Throughout this novena the sweetness of the union continued, with the deep realization of the presence of the Holy Spirit and of His working in my soul. I was made to see the evil of self-love, and of human respect which is indirectly self-love. I realized their presence in my soul and my utter inability to rid myself of their roots. I was drawn to ask for a long time, that the Holy Spirit would remove those roots and fibres. I was made to realize the power given to Mary in that word said

to the serpent in the Garden of Paradise, *"She shall crush thy head."* I understood that it was at this time, among others, that she would use that power, when the soul was to be rid of the roots and fibres that come of our sinful inheritance. I continued to ask her to use that power, and to aid *me* by her prayers.

I was shown the presence of self-love in retrospection, in worry regarding the past or the future. I was tried and tested along those lines. In my soul I realized a higher meaning of the passage, *"Forget thy people, and thy father's house, and the King shall greatly desire thy beauty."* Thy people, that is, creatures; and thy father's house, self. With this understanding it was repeated again and again in my soul. The Holy Spirit was making me desire to be freed from self and creatures, that the King might greatly desire my beauty, the beauty that would then be given me.

UNION WITH THE WILL OF GOD

After He had continued His work of trying and testing me, along the line of self-love, He gave me, in wondrous sweetness of union, a deeper realization of the worth and beauty of union with the Will of God. My soul was drawn more and more deeply into union with the deepening realization of the *Adorable Will of God*. I worshipped It in deepest adoration and union. I was shown the

destiny of the Divine Will and our *privilege* in being allowed to perform it. Then I was tried and tested in various ways as to my conformity with the Will of God. Every plan or desire was frustrated so that my will might be formed more in union with the Divine Will. After these trials, I was drawn into deeper adoration of the Holy Will of God.

It was shown in my soul that in the novena I should then begin the Holy Spirit would unite with me in honor of *His union with Mary in her Communions*. I just left my soul open to the Divine action. I think I was a little hesitant about taking any steps until the light was very clear. The next morning I awoke with this prayer on my lips, "Jesus, my God, I adore Thee here present in the Sacrament of Thy Love." This praying lasted continuously for two or three minutes. I was surprised at it, as it had been so long since I was able to *think* His Name or to turn my thoughts to Him. What seemed most strange to me was the fact that I did not experience any of the joy that should have been mine in being allowed to speak to my Beloved. When it ceased there was just the continuous breathing, "Holy Spirit of Love!" Then it was shown to me that this was as an exterior sign that was given me, since I had hesitated when only the spiritual knowledge was given in my soul. The same thing

happened the next morning. Again, I was shown that the Holy Spirit was uniting with me in honor of His union with my beautiful Mother in her Communions.

Throughout this novena there was just a quiet sense of union and a continuous trial as to my *conformity with the Will of God.* I was tested and tried and wearied by the feeling of the spiritual nature of all these things. I was weighted down gently and firmly in the quiet suffering. In the great sense of weariness, I was made to realize the Will of God, made to be willing to bear the suffering since He willed it. Then it was shown me that I was being advanced in conformity to the Divine Will. There was in my soul a deeper appreciation and realization of the worth and dignity of that Adorable Will.

Then was also shown dimly to my soul that in some way the Holy Spirit was *uniting me to Jesus.* I did not clearly understand. There was also given to my soul a deeper realization and *adoration of the mystery of the Adorable Trinity.*

In the novena that I then began, I gave myself to the Holy Spirit that He would unite with me *in honor of His union with Mary in her Assumption.* I realized the tender condescension in the coincidence that this novena was to end on the Feast of the Purity of Mary. *The Forty Hours Devotion* filled the first days of this novena. There

was an utter absence of realization of Our Lord's Presence on the Altar, except, of course, by faith. While I felt the need of Him in my very soul, I quietly accepted the suffering as His Will. The realization of the Divine Will seems to cover everything. I remained in His Presence, while my soul was in continuous union with the Holy Spirit. In my soul in deep adoration was the continuous breathing, *"Holy! Holy! Holy!"*

On the *Feast of the Maternity of Mary* I had expected that perhaps my fair Mother would then receive me as her child in the special way that had been promised. In fact I had quietly looked for this favor on every possible occasion. There was only just a continuation of the dulled, wearied sense of being worn down and tried in conformity to the Will of God. I accepted His Will, and ceased to look for that manifestation of His Mercy until He willed it. Then it was shown to my soul that inasmuch as I had advanced in conformity to the Will of God, I had become more Mary's child. After further quiet suffering of weariness, my soul was drawn into—I do not know if I should so call it—a *contemplation* of the Mystery of the Adorable Trinity. I dwelt in the realization and adoration of this ineffable mystery.

After this I was drawn to pray for souls in deep union. At times, the sweetness of union increased to a sort of bliss. There was no conscious-

ness of praying. My soul was just carried into union with God. Then my soul was filled with a deeper joy and adoration of the Adorable Will of God. The realization, the appreciation of the dignity, the grandeur, of the Divine Will filled me with such bliss as I cannot express. Just at the thought, *the Adorable Will of God,* my soul experienced such bliss as I had never known.

THE HOLY TRINITY

On the Feast of the *Purity of Mary,* after quiet suffering and a praying for souls, the burden was lifted and my soul was filled with wonderful sweetness of union. In deepest adoration, I could only murmur, "Holy! Holy! Holy!" while my soul was filled with a sense of God. I realized Him as *my God* in a wonderful, tender closeness. God to me. One with me! My soul lived in the sweetness of that realization—God! *My* God! *My* God!

Then by degrees I was conscious of an attention of soul to the Three Persons of the Adorable Trinity. It was not a praying or a contemplation, but an attention of soul.

On Sunday, the Feast of the Purity of Mary, when I was to finish that last novena, at the moment of reception of Holy Communion, there was uttered in my soul clearly and distinctly, "Worship the Adorable Trinity with the Most Pure

Heart of Mary." In great sweetness of union, my soul was held in that adoration. At first I did not *fully* appreciate the greatness of the favor granted me, because there was a little disappointment in my heart. I had hoped that at the close of all these unions, in some way, Our Lord would be given to me, that some sense of His Presence would be vouchsafed to my waiting soul. So, while I adored, and realized the beauty of this union with the Most Pure Heart of Mary, there was a little pain of disappointment deep down in my heart.

Later it was shown to my soul that in a very special and intimate manner I was to *worship the Adorable Trinity, with the Most Pure Heart of Mary,* as if *that Heart were mine.* In order that I might find favor, that my worship might be acceptable to the Adorable Trinity in a very special way, the mercy was given me that the adoration from my heart was, by this union, as if it were the adoration from the Most Pure Heart of Mary. I was clothed, as it were, in the beauty and graces of my sweet Mother. This gracious condescension was very clearly manifested to my soul. I believed and adored. My soul was filled with the joy of this wondrous favor. My soul continued for some days to live in this adoration of the Adorable Trinity. It was not that I did anything, but my soul remained deep, deep in this adoration,

while I realized that the Holy Trinity was being adored by the Most Pure Heart of Mary, and the adoration was received as if it were mine.

I was made conscious of the tiniest fibre of self-love in any of my actions, thoughts or feelings.

More clearly than ever, I was made aware of the obstacle to my purity of being in the presence of self-love. I pleaded in deep union that self-love would be uprooted and cast out. I was given a deeper realization of the purity of Mary, of the beauty of that purity—purity, of course, from every taint, purity from aims, desires, or thoughts of self, purity from thought of creatures; the purity that stands before the Face of God. "My perfect one is but one!"

By degrees I was drawn to realize the *need of perfect charity*. I pleaded long and deeply that the Holy Spirit would give me that charity. Again my soul was drawn more deeply and sweetly into an adoration of the Adorable Will of God.

I am adding this now after the lapse of a year. In the interval every recollection of what had happened in my soul was blotted out. I knew that I had made some intention under the action of the Holy Spirit, but what that movement was, remained a blank. I tried a few times to remember, then I waited. In His own good time, He would reveal Himself. It was all shown, in an instant, with perfect clearness. After I had been drawn

into that deep adoration of the Divine Will, I was moved to *worship with the Most Pure Heart of Mary,* the Adorable Trinity as present in *her.* I lived for the space of a novena in this adoration, and in the wondrous contemplation of the Adorable Trinity as present in the soul of Mary. I cannot speak of the wonder and beauty of the depths of this contemplation.

At the end of this novena, I was impelled to worship with the Most Pure Heart of Mary, the Adorable Trinity present in *my* soul. Instantly my soul was held under a seeming weight. There was a perfect blank regarding all past favors. I knew I had acted under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit. Yet I was held—I was given the comfort to know that I had not offended. But I knew my soul was held. Then there kept rising in my soul a constant murmur, "Blessed are they who suffer persecution, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." At first, I did not understand the meaning of this insistence, then dimly I began to realize that some suffering was to be asked of me. I agreed to whatever was the Will of God as intimated by the word of warning. The next day I became ill.

Oct. 1909. In this illness, which lasted from the thirteenth of October till the end of December, there were of course, the necessary discomforts incident to a heavy sickness. But this was of little moment compared to the trial in my soul. There

was an utter absence of the slightest sense of union with the Holy Spirit. From the January preceding, my soul had been conscious of a union with the Holy Spirit, more or less marked, more or less sweet, according to His working in my soul. In *this* illness I was deprived of that sense of union. All remembrance of union with Mary was taken from me. I was *dimly* conscious that all this was the action of God in some mysterious way. There was in my soul just a sense of waiting, waiting for—I knew not what. I cannot express the weariness of that sense of waiting from Mid-October till the last day of the Triduum before the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The sense of waiting had been getting more and more wearying until I think the Holy Spirit had accomplished by its means the work He wished to effect in my soul. It had reached a point, when my soul, worn and spent beyond further endurance, cried "Oh my God! I cannot bear this one second longer!" Instantly following, from the depths of my heart came the prayer, "I will bear it as long as You will." In a moment, the burden was lifted, and in deep peace I prepared for the next day's feast.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

At *Communion, on the beautiful day of the Immaculate Conception,* the former sense of union

and sweetness returned. I was impelled to begin from there a novena in honor of the nine months from the first moment of the Immaculate Conception, giving my soul and body to the Holy Spirit, as if they were the soul and body of Mary, that He might work His Will in them and unite them to Himself.

On the last day of that novena, I was filled with a greater sense of sweetness than ever before, and a clear realization of the special incoming of the Holy Spirit. This realization and sweetness lasted for hours.

The next day, I was impelled to begin a *novena before Christmas* in honor of the nine months from the first moment of the Incarnation till the Birth of Christ. I was moved to give myself to the Holy Spirit that He might unite with me and so form me one with Christ.

On *Christmas eve,* the *suffering* and *waiting for Our Lord* increased to a deep yearning. I knew that I could not attend the Midnight Mass, but the yearning increased until for the three hours before the Mass it was an agony of desire. I felt almost dying of the need of Him. I realized at the time that God was giving me strength just sufficient, otherwise I could not have borne this anguish. Since then, I have thought that the Holy Spirit was making me to desire Jesus so greatly to make up to Him for the lack of desire from

His own, when He came to earth, "and His own received Him not"; and, also, for the lack of desire on the part of thousands since then.

When this yearning had become so great that I could no longer endure it, *our sweet Lord manifested Himself to my soul.* I do not say came—because it was as if He were always there. He just put aside the veil, and I had Him. My soul loved Him and adored Him in deepest joy. I did not see Him with my bodily eyes, but I did not need their aid. My soul beheld Him with more joy and union than if He were presented in any way external to me. He was mine. I know I did not kiss His Hands and Feet with my bodily lips, but my soul received the comfort that would come of so doing. I did not think of these things at that time. My soul just loved and adored, and gazed and comforted itself for all the months of deprivation. I do not know how long my Beloved deigned to allow me to love Him. I know it was a long, sweet time. I thought afterwards that perhaps it may have been during the Midnight Mass, but I do not know. Then by degrees He gently withdrew, and my soul remained in peace and sweetness, remembering His tender mercy. It was some hours before the sweetness and tender quiet joy allowed me to sleep. I thought that at the morning Mass and Communion He would come again.

CHRISTMAS DAY

At *Holy Communion on Christmas Day,* there was just an increased sense of union and sweetness. All day I waited quietly for His coming, while my soul was filled with this constant breathing, "Purity of the Body and Soul of Jesus Christ, transform me." At last I questioned the Holy Spirit, "Why, when I had thought He was going to give me Jesus, was there just this continuous breathing in my soul, *"Purity of the Body and Soul of Jesus Christ, transform me?"* He showed me clearly, in my soul, that by this prayer and the consequent working of the Spirit of Love, He was giving me more of Jesus, was making me more one with my Beloved than if Jesus were manifested in any way *exterior* to me, or even in the deeper joy of having Him manifested in my *soul.* The privation and the praying were necessary for the work of forming me one with Jesus in the Mystical Incarnation of grace. Again it was shown me how the increase of grace resulting from my prayer was a fuller incoming of the Holy Spirit, *forming me more one with Christ.* I was made to understand how Jesus was thus more and more brought into the soul by the Mystical Incarnation. This knowledge was given more and more clearly at different intervals throughout the course of the following weeks. My soul received this knowledge

with great joy and sweetness, and a deepening appreciation of the mystical Incarnation by grace. I cannot express the beauty of this truth as it was shown to me. My soul was filled with great joy in the contemplation of the transforming power of grace, the wonder of this "changing into the Divine Nature."

In the following months of my convalescence and weakness the Holy Spirit worked out the plan He had intimated in the warning, *"Blessed are they who suffer persecution for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."* He showed me that the work was going to be done and I agreed to His Will. In various ways and through the means of others He made me suffer. He made me understand that if I wanted the end, the Kingdom of God in my soul, I must want the means. I saw that all these sufferings were to uproot human respect, and incidentally, self-love. I found these trials very hard, especially at the beginning. He gave me grace, however, to bear, then to look for them; and at the end, to pray that they might not cease till the work was accomplished in my soul, which the Holy Spirit had intended to effect through their means. He also gave me grace to be without feeling of unforgiveness or bitterness. I prayed in a special way for all those He was using as His instruments. I do not mean that I did not feel to the full every trial, small or great. I shrank and

quivered under some, even to the last. But I desired them all for the work they were doing. When the Holy Spirit intends some suffering to be applied to a soul, every point of that suffering is felt. No human philosophy, or reasoning of common sense, can help in those matters. The soul is made alive and sensitive to every finest, keenest, and most hidden point of suffering in the trial. During all this time there was a constant sense of union with the Holy Spirit, and the continuous breathing in my soul, "Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ, transform me!"

In January, after these months of entire obliteration of all remembrance of my union with Mary, came with great joy and deep interior sweetness this murmur in my soul, "With the Most Pure Heart of Mary, I worship the Adorable Trinity." My soul was drawn deeply into prayer, and it was shown me that I had been so adoring in the past months of trial, even though I had not the comfort of realizing at the time. In the work the Holy Spirit had been accomplishing in my soul by suffering, He had been making me more united to the Most Pure Heart of Mary, so that her worship of the Adorable Trinity was more fully, more truly, mine. Then followed days of great union and a continuous worshipping of the Adorable Trinity with the Most Pure Heart of Mary.

On the *Feast of the Espousals of Mary,* my soul was drawn deeply into the contemplation of the fullness of grace in Mary's soul. My soul gazed at the beauty, the wonder of grace—of the fullness of grace in the soul of Mary. Deeply and more deeply my soul contemplated the marvel—the riches of that fullness of grace. For days, I lived in the beauty and in the joy that flooded my being. I cannot fully express these things. Then was said in my soul: "Worship the Adorable Trinity with Mary's fullness of grace." I continued to do so in deep union, the prayer, now and then rising—"I worship the Adorable Trinity with Mary's fullness of grace." By degrees, it was shown me that I was receiving of my sweet Mother's fullness of grace. I was being clothed in her beauty of grace so that my worship might be acceptable to the Adorable Trinity. She was giving me of her riches. I realized this truth more and more clearly. It was so sweetly and beautifully manifested to me. Later I contemplated Mary's soul under the action of the Holy Spirit, His grace in her, His joy in her fullness of grace. I was given to understand how we glorify Him by our reverence of Mary, His perfect work. I cannot express these things as they are shown me. I just touch on them in order to note them.

It was also shown to my soul *Mary's relation to Jesus as Mother.* As I was living in these con-

templations and in deep sweet union, by degrees, at intervals would rise the prayer, "Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ, sanctify me."

When I am moved to utter one form of this prayer or any other, I can do only that. The former ones are hidden and have no unction for me. This prayer became more and more frequent, as I continued to worship with Mary's fullness of grace.

"BEHOLD I COME TO DO THY WILL"

About this time I was recommended by my director to ask Our Lord to cure me for the work He had for me to do. I offered my acceptance of God's Will as thus manifested, in union with Our Lord's acceptance of His Father's Will when He said, "Sacrifices and oblations Thou wouldst not . . . but a body Thou hast fitted for me. Then said I, *Behold, I come to do Thy Will, O my God*". . . I made my sacrifice to go forth into exterior works if God so willed. It *had* seemed to me that He had called me to a life of prayer and suffering until the happy moment when I would soon go Home to Him. But I stood before Him with Mary—"Behold the handmaid of the Lord!"

Then it was shown to my soul how Mary had glorified God in her perfect acceptance of the word of the High Priest for her Espousals. She

had *made her vow of virginity to the Most High,* and now, in seeming contradiction, the Lord manifested His Will through His minister. My soul contemplated Mary's perfect faith and confidence in God, and the perfect union of her Will with His. She did not know of His further design. All that was hidden from her. But in this very mystery of His ways, she was given the opportunity of worshipping Him in sublime faith and hope and in love, in the perfect union of will. My soul lived for days in the contemplation of Mary's beautiful, unwavering faith and trust in God. Unquestioningly she knew He would not contradict Himself. He had accepted her vows, and now through His minister He was manifesting His Will. Her absolute obedience to authority gave more glory to God than if she had known *how* He would make all things conduce to His design.

Then it was shown me that the Holy Spirit had made use of my acceptation of the word of the priest and my consequent sacrifice and obedience, *to unite me with Mary* and to make me *a little like my sweet Mother* in this beautiful mystery of her life. I was made to understand that, as in Mary's case, the apparent contradiction was but a means for the working of God's plan to give us His Son, so would He work His designs in my regard through this obedience.

On the *feast of Our Lady of Lourdes* my soul was filled with wondrous sweetness and I was drawn into contemplation of the beauty of Mary's body and soul. I cannot express that beauty as it was shown to me. My soul gazed on it, lived in that beauty, and in the joy, the bliss, that came from it. I have no words to describe it. I do not think any human words could do so. Throughout some days more and more of that beauty was unfolded to my soul. Then the whisper rose in my soul: *"Worship the Adorable Trinity with the beauty of Mary, body and soul."* I did so in deep joy and unceasing union. It was shown me that I was being clothed with the beauty of Mary that I might find favor in His sight. The promise made in my retreat was recalled to me. *Then* it had been promised that I would receive grace in some special form, the graciousness of beauty. At this time, it was made clear that I was receiving that favor, that I was being clothed with the beauty of Mary, her spiritual beauty of body and soul. I remained for some days worshipping the Adorable Trinity with the beauty of Mary, believing and realizing that her beauty was being more and more given to me that I might find favor.

SILENCE OF THE SOUL OF MARY

I was drawn more deeply into union and my soul contemplated the *Silence of the soul of Mary,*

a silence wherein God could utter Himself, a silence that was the absence of fears or desires, absence of self, of self-aims, of expectation, the absence of thought of creatures—a silence from all movement that could prevent the perfect expression of God's Will. I find it hard to express the beauty, the charm, the sweet, cool repose of the silence of Mary's soul as it was shown to me. This contemplation gave me more joy than even the others had given me. I seemed to realize how God brooded in love, as it were, in the deep wonderful silence of that soul. I seemed to understand a little of His joy in that sweet cool silence. It had so drawn Him that in its depths He had uttered The Word.

As my soul was coming from this contemplation, the whisper came, *"Worship the Adorable Trinity,* with the silence of the soul of Mary." I continued to do so, while at intervals some new beauty of her silence of soul was shown me. In this adoration and union the Holy Spirit at times would cause the prayer, "With the silence of the soul of Mary, I worship the Adorable Trinity." Later it was just the breathing—"With the silence of the soul of Mary." By degrees, as I continued this adoration, there was at times in my soul the continuous prayer like the jetting-up from a fountain, "Purity of the Body and Soul of Jesus Christ, beautify me."

My soul continued in the union, the sweetness lessening by degrees as there kept rising in my soul this word of preparation and guidance, "Without worry, without expectation!" Then I was tried along these lines. I was made to worry over things past or future, as I had never done. I had thought that I had very little of worry in my nature. But the Holy Spirit brought out every hidden particle and used it to fret and trouble me until it seemed I was made up of little else than worry and useless expectation. I did not wish to worry, but I could not withhold myself from the work that was being done in my soul. I prayed that the Holy Spirit would rid me of the obstacle. I realized how this looking back or looking forward in worry or expectation was an impediment to the perfect working of God in the soul. After the trial had continued some time and I was advanced a little, there kept rising in my soul this gentle murmur, "Casting all your care upon the Lord, for He hath care of you." This continued to aid in times of need; and later to comfort and console. At the end it brought me great sweetness and quiet trust.

In a special trial that I had to undergo through some months previous, I was tempted at times to speak in order to exonerate another. But I understood dimly that I should keep silence. I found the trial so grievous, so opposed to every part of my

nature, that to keep silence under it, I needed all the help possible. Sometimes I am afraid that I did not bear all patiently. At the beginning I felt sometimes hurt and indignant, but He knows how this peculiar trial stung and fretted me.

I was made to understand how *Mary glorified God in the silence of her perfect trust* in her trial before the thought and indecision of Saint Joseph. Then it was shown me that the Holy Spirit was making use of this trial He had sent me, to form me, by the grace obtained, a little like unto Mary in this event in her life. It was shown me that I must continue to be silent in union with Mary. In the Lord's own good time He would make the truth manifest.

In this trial there were a few points of distant similarity to Mary's that the dear sweet Lord, in His tender condescension, made use of in order to bestow upon me this gracious favor.

About this time I was conscious of a continuous murmur, *"Without plans, without arrangements!"* The Holy Spirit was beginning His work to rid me of these disturbing elements. Without desiring it, I was made to arrange about *this* matter, to plan about *that* event. I had not been in the habit of so doing for months, I might say years, so this working disturbed me greatly. Every

plan was frustrated. It was sufficient for me to arrange about some matter, to have the exact opposite occur. While I was in this trial I could not help myself. It is not that the Holy Spirit is the cause of any fault, but when the tendency, however slight, is in the soul, He causes it to be realized in conscience, so that it may produce suffering, and prayer may be applied to it; then He will cast it out and so purify the soul. By degrees, as the work was being accomplished, there was at times a constant murmur in my soul, "The Lord ruleth me. I shall want for nothing." This was help at first as the trial was lessening; then later it was a great joy and deep interior comfort.

On the Feast of *Our Lady of Good Counsel,* it was shown to me that a silence of soul would be given me like unto the silence of the soul of Mary; that the work that had been done in my soul was for that purpose, to produce in me a silence wherein the will of God might express itself without hindrance. I understood how He was working to rid me of all disturbing elements as opposed to that silence of soul necessary for His designs. I realized that the work would continue until He had effected His purpose. I agreed to His further action. I desired to have all self-love, human respect in any form removed, so that the Will of God might have free action in my soul.

PURITY OF THE BODY AND SOUL OF JESUS CHRIST

Then gradually as the Holy Spirit continued His working, He caused the continuous prayer to well up in my soul, "*Purity of the Body and Soul of Jesus Christ, consecrate me.*" I began to realize the need of greater charity. I pleaded that it might be given me. I was exercised in that virtue by trials. In these trials I was moved to beg that I might have not only love, but the tenderness of love for all. After severe exercising the understanding was given to me that I had been advanced a little in the virtue of charity.

At times my soul would be drawn deeply into prayer, and the contemplation of the Purity of the Body and Soul of Christ would be given to me. My soul gazed in deep adoration and joy on the Purity of His Sacred Body and Soul. I cannot express this.

By degrees, especially after severe exercising in charity and strong pleading for that virtue, it was shown to my soul that I was receiving of the Purity of the Body and Soul of Jesus Christ that I might offer it for souls. I cannot speak here of the bliss that filled my whole being when that Purity was given to me. Again and again in His gracious condescension He gave me more and more of His purity. This tender mercy continued

through the trials and advancements in charity until the Feast of Pentecost.

WORSHIP OF THE HOLY GHOST

On that day, the *Holy Ghost came to me in some special way*. He had given Himself to me on former occasions, each time more and more fully; but in this coming there was more of His personality. I do not say the fullness of His personality, but I realized that He had become more one with my soul, more united to me, more present in Himself, in His own sweet personality, than ever before.

Heretofore at times there was a constant prayer, "Come, Holy Ghost!" or just the breathing, "Come!" On this day I tried to utter that prayer but I could not. I tried at various times, but at each attempt I was held, the sweetness and the sense of union increasing, and I could only murmur in adoration and love, *"Oh, Holy Spirit! Oh, Love Divine!"* In the days that followed, I tried at times to breathe that former prayer, "Come, Holy Spirit." The same result ensued until it was shown me that He *had* come, there was no further need to invite Him. That whole day and the days that followed were filled with wonderful joy in the deep realization of His presence in my soul. I realized Him, I adored and loved in the sweetness, the lightness, the bliss

that His presence produced. It was shown to me that He had come in this intimate manner at the end of the union He had been effecting with me in honor of His union with Mary in the Incarnation. Since the novena before Christmas He had been working in my soul to produce this union. Later this was again shown me, and also the knowledge given me, that He had been uniting with me in honor of His union with Mary in the Immaculate Conception. This from the middle of October, all through my illness, until the novena after the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. He showed me that these unions were then brought to a certain state, but they would continue till the end of my life. He would be constantly forming me in *grace* in honor of His union with Mary in the Immaculate Conception. He would be constantly forming me, by grace, *one with Jesus*, in honor of His union with Mary in the Incarnation.

This was shown me a few times, more and more clearly each time, with a clearer understanding of some form of the past working in my soul. He made me aware how these unions had been first promised, then worked out in the space of a day for each; then through a longer period of days, and lastly through some months. He would continue the plan that he had been gradually unfolding, but these unions would continue in their workings and their results until the end of my life.

I knew that later He would effect the union with me in honor of His union with Mary in her Dolors. Dimly I realized that it would hold some greater form of suffering for me. I was questioned as to my willingness to receive the suffering necessary for this union.

After the Feast of Pentecost, I lived in a wondrous sense of union with the Holy Spirit, realizing more and more deeply His presence in my soul in joy and sweetness and quiet bliss.

UNION OF LOVE

Then He showed me that *He was uniting me to Jesus in a special union of love,* that He, the Spirit of Love, was the cause of this union of love. I realized this union with Jesus. He was uniting with my soul more and more closely through the action and the presence of the Holy Spirit of Love. It was a spiritual bridal that was being formed more deeply, more closely every moment. As a bride more intimately united to her bridegroom could by the increased love and favor obtain more, so by this union with Jesus I was becoming more and more efficacious for souls.

There was no need of formally asking or praying for them; the union, by its very existence, deepening and increasing, was constantly producing its fruit in souls. Graces were flowing out to souls the more closely, the more deeply the Holy

Spirit of Love was uniting me to Jesus. For some days I lived in the joy of this union with Jesus and with the Spirit of Love, realizing as the fruit of the union, souls.

Then, at times, when in deep sweet union, sometimes when the joy was at its greatest, I would be held, and the alternative proposed; would I continue in this bliss of realizing Jesus, or would I forego it to suffer for souls? With the realization of a great joy put aside and of great suffering to be endured, He gave me grace always to accept the suffering and in the anguish of my love to cry out, *"Souls, my Beloved! Souls!"* I would then be made to suffer not only by the withdrawal of all sense of union but by a deep interior agony of soul. This for a long or short period, according to the grace to be obtained or the need of the soul. With the lifting of the burden would come the knowledge that souls had been helped. The recurrence of the times of suffering for souls had been gradually becoming more frequent. The hours of union with Jesus in love and joy were given to me after longer intervals, until at length I began to realize that the sacrifice would be required of me. I must give up the sense of union with Jesus for souls. I knew the union would continue, but I must renounce the joy of it. My sacrifice was accepted and tested in the following weeks. In the midst of my suffering for souls, when

all sense of Jesus had been withdrawn, there would come at times, I do not call it a temptation, but a test. In some way a sense of Our Lord's presence would be just held out to me, so that it seemed I could have it if I would move my desires to it, and the alternative to continue in the state of privation and suffering for souls. I knew by the light the Holy Spirit gave me that this was a test, a temptation of love, as it were. Grace was given me to keep my soul from the proffered joy and to continue in the state of suffering for souls. This test was very trying. It seemed to hurt my love so. Later it would be shown me that souls had received great graces. A few times I would know the particular soul for whom I had been suffering.

JUNE THE MONTH OF LOVE

I offered the month of June as a month of love, the love of the fulfillment of His Will. Dimly I knew that it held some suffering for me.

On the feast of the Sacred Heart, early in June, it was dimly shown to my soul that I must be willing to give up my yearning for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in any way not in perfect accordance with the Divine Will. I did not quite understand, but I knew it would be manifested clearly to me, at some later time. I agreed to whatsoever was required of me. I knew that the work would be

for souls. Then by my visit and stay in the City I was deprived of the privilege of remaining before the Blessed Sacrament. There kept growing in my soul a quiet sense of loss, an increasing realization of His absence, of the need of Him, but at the same time a gentle submission to His Will. My illness which took place during my visit was a great trial to me. Naturally speaking, it had come at a most inopportune time. Towards the end of the sickness I was shown how Mary glorified God in the perfect confidence, the perfect faith, the perfect peace of her soul in trial. I was given to understand that the Holy Spirit had been making use of the present trial through the grace obtained, to form me like unto my sweet Mother. I was too weak to follow the retreat which came shortly after my return from the city. In the first four days I was made to suffer to obtain grace for the community, and especially for one soul. When the burden lifted I was given the knowledge that the suffering had been efficacious. Then I was drawn into such deep soul-longing for Our Lord, such interior agony of desire, that I felt I should die of the need of Him. My very soul seemed dying. Then without movement of coming, as if He had always been there, in some deep quiet way, *He manifested Himself to my soul, He was mine!* More than at any other time, I realized Him. *My soul united with Him*

in deep quiet joy and peace. Then after some time there was a gentle withdrawal. In my soul, it was again shown, more clearly this time, that I must be willing to give up the kind of longing and yearning I had for Him in the Blessed Sacrament; if He were to allow me to satisfy my love for Him, it would in some way be an obstacle to the work He had ordained for souls. Again, I did not see why or how this should be, but I agreed from my heart. He had given me a great *desire for souls,* a desire even to *suffer for them* that *I might give them to Him.*

By degrees, the *Holy Spirit was preparing me for the union in honor of His union with Mary in her Dolors.* I became filled with a deep sense of dread, of fear of that which was in store for me. I was trusting in God, but the sense of fear was very great. I was questioned as to my willingness to receive the suffering. I agreed to whatsoever was the Divine Will, though my soul was filled with intense dread and fear.

(The writing of these spiritual experiences and contemplations ends here. The approach of her last illness prevented the further recording of her extraordinary revelations, but we can easily surmise that they continued in an increasing ratio of fervor and grace until the Divine Lover took her to Himself—to the glory that is His from all eternity.)

PRAYERS, OFFERINGS AND CONTEMPLATIONS

(The following prayers, offerings, and contemplations were found after the death of Sister Mary John Berchmans among her papers. They were jotted down apparently at odd times. They are in her unmistakable handwriting, and are, of course, her own thoughts and experiences.)

OFFERING

In reparation of my sins and the sins of the world; for the conversion of sinners; for the conversion of the heathen; for the spread and propagation of the Faith; for the prevention of sin; for the frustration of the plans of the evil one; for the strengthening of grace in the souls of the just, and of the tempted; for the little children, and young girls; for the prevention of blasphemies and sacrilege; for all the wants of the Church; for the intention of the Pope; for the spread of the practice of frequent Communion; for the needs of our Community; for priests and religious, especially those of France; for all my pupils, for my friends and relatives; for the sick and dying; for the relief of the Souls in Purgatory; for the Intentions and Interests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

1st, a good practice is to offer the hours; in union with the eternal ages of the Adorable Trinity and all the works therein accomplished.

2nd, in union with the years and the works of Jesus in His Mortal Life, His Heavenly Life, His Eucharistic Life, and His Sacrificial Life.

3rd, in union with the years and works of Mary; of the angels, the saints, and the whole Church of God.

THE BLESSED TRINITY

O Beata Trinitas! O Beata Trinitas! How I love the Father! Sometimes I feel inundated with the tenderest love for God the Father. I seem filled with love for Him, immersed in a sea of tenderest love. To think that He—immensity, power, existence, being, grandeur, might, strength, omnipotence, without Whom there is nothing—that He creates, upholds, adorns, preserves the tiny flower, the blush of the rose, the down of the butterfly's wing, the gold of the sunset cloud, that He tenderly comes down to all this, is matter for reverent, sweetest love and attention. That He who could crush, annihilate—in a breath of His calm, adorable majesty—that He, after creating, preserves, re-creates continually the very tiniest fibre of our inmost being, every dawn of thought or emotion—every fold within fold, the first actuating stirrings of the inmost depths of the soul! That even when we sin, He continues to uphold, to re-create, to preserve the very will, the fibres of intention, of nerve, of brain, of entire body and

soul by which we offend Him—this could be, matter for reverent, loving tears.

He is worthy of all love! I think that sometimes people have a fear, a reverence, an awe of the Father that keeps them at a distance from Him or rather from loving Him. They take refuge from the grandeur of the Father—as they think it—in the Son. I think this attitude tends to hurt the growth of real inner spirituality. Of course, we know that each of the Three Divine Persons possesses the fullness of the powers of the others. "These Three are one." "But the Father also loveth you." He "so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son." If we could realize what that *means,* to give His *only* begotten Son! To give Him, to what?—we might get some insight or grasp of the Father's immense love for us. If we could fathom ever so little what the Incarnation meant for the majesty of God; what the life of obscurity, of ignominy, of shame, of suffering, meant to the Divine Grandeur, and what that only-begotten Son was to the Father, we might see a little of the immensity of that Father's love; we might find life too short to enable us to give love for love.

I feel as a little child before the Father, a little, loving foolish child, that knows not anything. His greatness, His magnificence gives me a fuller idea of His wondrous, tender love for me,

and for all—all. He loves every work of His hands. I feel like falling down and loving Him to the utmost of feeling, of thought, even to the effacement of myself. Prostrate before Him, I think that one naturally loses oneself when loving Him and only loves; does not think, or ask or revert to self, but just loves, loves—is annihilated, as it were, in love! I think that one grows in knowledge of the Father by reverent, interior saying of the "Our Father"; saying it with the soul or heart, slowly, slowly. It fills one with interior light, unction, and great love for the Father.

Our Father, Father of the sweet Lord Jesus Christ, whose Spirit is Love, who "so lovest the world as to give us Thine only-begotten Son," make all Thy children love Thee for Thy love.

PRAYER TO THE THREE PERSONS OF THE BLESSED TRINITY

That I may love Thee to the fullest extent of my being in time and in eternity; that I may do all the good Thou hast destined me to do, according to the furthest reach of Thy Will; and that I may have an abiding sense of Thy Presence.

THE YEARNING OF CHRIST

Worship the waiting, the yearning waiting, of the Son of God for the moment of the Incarnation

when "He rejoiced as a giant to run his course!" His waiting from the everlasting! His waiting for the working of grace in souls; their being formed into the mystical Body through union with Him by grace of the Incarnation in each soul; His weary, fruitless waiting for thousands of lost souls bought with a great price. Worship the Divine waiting on Mary's consent.

Make reparation in union with Him for His waiting for the work of His Redemption in each soul; the fruition of the Incarnation. Give Him comfort for that, and for His long years of waiting in the Eucharist, the continuation of the Incarnation.

Contemplate the most pure Heart of Mary. See the work of the Father in her, His Elect Daughter; the work of God the Son in her, His Virgin Mother; the work of God the Holy Ghost in her, His Immaculate Spouse. Follow out this contemplation in the Immaculate Conception, in the Incarnation, and then during the wondrous years of Mary's life. Stay some days on each subject. Live in the thoughts.

AN HOUR OF DESIRE

Sometimes make an hour of desire for the sweet Lord, "Who came to His own and His own received Him not," in reparation for all the lack of desire, the rejection of Him from the years even

before the time of Bethlehem's refusal—"no room for Him!"—through the thirty-three years of yearning on the Savior's part; and down through the ages until there will be no more time for man's casting Him aside.

Unite with Mary's desire when she wanted, during the nine wondrous months, to see the Face of the Babe; in those three days of loss, her yearning for Him; her yearning for Him during the three years' ministry; her longing to take Him into her arms during the Passion; her desolation and need of Him in the days of entombment; and her waiting and longing for the face of the King in His beauty during the fifteen years before the Assumption.

Unite with the mutual and reciprocal desire of the Three Divine Persons during the thirty-three years—

> Ask of the Father great purity;
> of the Son, deep humility;
> of the Holy Ghost, burning love.

TO WORSHIP THE HOLY SPIRIT AT THE MOMENT OF THE INCARNATION

In union with Mary to worship the Holy Spirit at the moment of that ineffable Union, giving Him again the joy He found in Mary, giving to her the bliss of recalling to Him that moment of union.

With the fruitfulness of Mary, and in union with her, to worship the eternal fecundity of God.

That Divine Union—worshipped by every incoming of grace in every soul.

To worship the Holy Spirit with the sweet Body of Jesus in union with Mary at the moment of the Incarnation, and after—That Body, the special work of the Holy Spirit in Mary; the sign, the token, the pledge, the outcome of His Union with her.

The Incarnation, in every consecration of the Mass is repeated, continued. Mary, with the sweet Body of Jesus in every Host, in the Incarnation of every Communion!

THE HOURS OF THE LAST SUPPER

Unite with Mary in adoration during the hours of the Last Supper. The time had come of which Jesus had so often spoken. The Apostles believed and adored. What of the faith, the worship of the Mother of Christ! According to the promise of the Master, the Holy Ghost would teach the Apostles all truth, would show them plainly, when later on He would come to them. The Holy Spirit dwelt in Mary in an effable manner. He had come to her as to none other in the Immaculate Conception. She was the Spouse of His love. What had he not taught her concerning this Mys-

tery of Love! This was His work, the continuation of the mystery of the Incarnation. Mary had been vastly concerned in that wondrous marvel of the Incarnation, when the Holy Ghost had come upon her, and the Holy One was born of her, the Son of the Most High God. Now the same adorable Body, the same precious Blood, the Soul, the Divinity of that sweet Babe of Bethlehem, of that Son of her love, are about to become present for all ages, among the children of men, to become the food and the life of souls. Interested, concerned, are not words to be used. What can we say of her union, her co-operation in this last effort of Divine Love . . . Can we measure what her faith obtained for the Apostles, for the first believers, for the thousands then unborn! Who can think that she was not one with Jesus in heart and mind, in adoring love, in acceptance of the Will of God? She knew, being taught of God, how men would disbelieve, how they would slight and wound, would dishonor and outrage her Beloved in the Sacrament of His Love. Did not her will have to accept all this future woe? Was not her consent asked for this usage of the Body and Blood of her Son? Her union with the Divine Will and her love for man caused the realization of the cry of her soul, "Be it done unto me according to Thy Word."

Who can say what the anguish of this acceptance purchased for us! She knew, she saw down through the ages, and she loved this Son, her God. Could she consent to give Him to such a future? "Be it done according to Thy Word!" Her love for Jesus, a two-edged sword, caused the anguish and the acceptance.

At the moment of the ineffable gift of Love, when "He blest and broke and gave," who can think that the fair sweet Mother was not particularly present to the mind of Jesus. Amid all the thoughts that are crowding in that Soul "sorrowful unto death," all the bitter realization of His future neglect, His loneliness, His dishonor in the Sacrament of the Altar, was there not a little tender smile of Love, perhaps unseen by those present, a turning of His Heart to Mary as He saw the perfection of her adoration, of her faith, and of her love?

How she followed the passing moments and events of that Last Supper! How any Mother would follow her Son in spirit at some banquet in his honor! What of the union of heart and soul of this Mother and this Son! Who can tell what her longing desire merited for us, and produced in our souls!

Unite in her faith and love, in her desire and adoration, as she worshipped Jesus tabernacled in the hearts of the more or less unthinking Apostles.

Make reparation with her for Judas! Prostrate your soul in the light of the Holy Spirit.

Let your soul lie prostrate, prone in worship, in utter adoration before Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament in union with Our Lady in her home, that night of the Agony of Jesus in the Garden, His betrayal and His capture and detention by the Jews. She had been informed by Jesus, she was enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and so she knew and followed in spirit—or rather her soul lay in anguished adoration before her Son, before the Will of God.

In this adoration there will be no thoughts, no words—just a lying prostrate of the soul. (The Holy Ghost will teach and guide.)

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN MARY

It makes a beautiful series of contemplations to dwell on the work of the Holy Ghost in Mary; to let your soul see His gifts of grace, of beauty to her, to drink in His love for her—

First—In the Immaculate Conception.
(Just let the Holy Spirit reveal.)

Second—In the Incarnation.
(Stay in reverent silence, prostrate in adoration.)

Third—In the Pentecostal Descent.
(See the glorious gifts with which He enriched her. If He was Comforter to the Apostles after the departure of Jesus, what must He have been to Mary!)

Fourth—In the years of waiting before the Assumption.
(Think what the Holy Spirit then was to Mary, especially in connection with the Holy Eucharist!)

Preparation for Death

It is good sometimes to make a novena in preparation for death in union with Our Lady during the nine days before her beautiful death when she was waiting and preparing to see the Face of the King in His beauty and be welcomed by Him into Heaven. Unite with her in these wondrous nine days as she commemorates the nine months of waiting and longing when she yearned to see the Face of the baby King and to welcome Him to earth.

Sometimes receive Communion with the most pure heart of Mary. Adore God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost with that heart. One gets graces thereby.

WORSHIP THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Let your soul lie prostrate in utter worship before the Blessed Sacrament in union with Mary, as she adored Jesus in the Eucharist during those wondrous years of her "Eucharistic Life." There were not many words—there was the silence of the soul's adoration.

Think of Mary and of the Holy Spirit of Love before the Blessed Sacrament. There, the Holy Eucharist, the continuation of the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit's great work—the very Body and Blood of her Son, her God, the Son of the Most High!

Kneel with Mary in adoration in the unutterable thoughts that come. Unite with them in their brooding love, in their silence of ineffable union.

CREATED LOVE AND UNCREATED LOVE

Worship the Holy Spirit with the Heart of Jesus Christ—all created love, centered in the Heart of Jesus, worshipping Uncreated Love.

Believe in God with the absolute knowledge of the Heart of Jesus. Hope with the perfect fruition of the Heart of Jesus; love with the infinite love of the Heart of Jesus.

THE SOUL OF JESUS CHRIST

Worship the Holy Spirit with the Soul of Jesus Christ at the moment of the Incarnation; all the purity, the beauty, the perfections, the ineffable loveliness of that Soul created in the Holy Tabernacle of Mary's being. Reverence her with the Soul of Jesus, her child, her God!

The body and soul becomes *one* with the Adorable Body and Soul of Christ when each movement, each stirring tendency, inclination, sense, faculty, power, and function of soul and body have become, through grace, one with Jesus such as He could countenance; or, when there *is such* a union of will—such a oneness—that no revolt is possible. We grow to this by degrees, through the union, by grace, with the Holy Spirit. A continual Incarnation.

Each increase of grace is an incoming of the Holy Spirit, and a rendering of the soul more one with the Soul of Christ: hence the Incarnation in the soul at that moment. Adore the Holy Spirit with the union which He effects, and with this mystical Incarnation. Adore the Sanctity of the All-Holy God with the purity of the Body and Soul of Jesus, especially at the moment of the Incarnation.

ACTS OF LOVE

Offer all your actions, prayers, works, heartbeats, breathings, as so many acts of love, adoration, reverence, worship, praise, thanksgiving, reparation, and petition:

1st, in union with those of Mary, of the angels, the saints, and of the whole Church of God.

2nd, in union with the merits and sentiments of Jesus, in His *Mortal Life,* Passion and Death; in His *Heavenly Life* as our great High Priest before the throne of God;
In His *Eucharistic Life*—in all the Hosts in all the tabernacle of the world;
In His *Sacrificial Life* as Priest and Victim in all the Masses throughout the world;

3rd, in union with the love, reverence, worship, praise which the Three Adorable Persons of the Trinity mutually and reciprocally gave one another.
For the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Leave the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament as Jesus left the bosom of the Father, for the Thirty-three Years' ministry—in union with Him and in the power of His faithfulness.

Dwell on this thought—live it—"For the glory of God and the salvation of souls."

DEVOTION TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

If souls only knew what a wondrous help, what a joy, is devotion to the Holy Ghost, that worship would spread like a flame of fire.

I wish that all religious could come to realize what an immense power for advancement in spirituality is this devotion. One makes not steps, but leaps forward in the upward path.

He teaches so many things that souls never knew or thought of before—things that make the life of the spirit a variety of loveliness. "The new and the old, my beloved, I have kept for thee."

And there are some souls who seem peculiarly fitted for receiving His special work in them and on them. If only they could all come to know the Gift of God!

May the day come, dear Lord, soon, soon!

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